State of Montana

2014 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

Governor Steve Bullock

Investing in Montana's Communities

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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For the Plan Year

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through

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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2014 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) is the lead agency overseeing the development of the Consolidated Plan. This Annual Action Plan is for the 12 months beginning April 1, 2014 and ending March 31, 2015. The annual plan is designed to meet the requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for three formula grant programs: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program; the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program; and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

As described in section I.B. of the state's Five-Year Consolidated Plan for April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2015, the state is committed to improving coordination between public and private housing entities and social service agencies serving low- and very low-income households, and between entities addressing non-housing community development needs.

Throughout the year, MDOC interacts with other agencies and organizations with a commitment to better develop housing and community development strategies. MDOC maintains its commitment to inform others of their responsibility to participate in the consolidated planning process and to promote affordable housing, adequate infrastructure, and economic development in local communities. MDOC supports a broad-based approach to address affordable housing and community development issues through the Consolidated Plan Steering Committee, Housing Coordinating Team (HCT), the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W_2ASACT), and the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA). These committees and groups provide direction and input to the Consolidated Plan and the state routinely consults with these groups.

Members of the **Consolidated Plan Steering Committee**, with representatives from the HOME, Montana Board of Housing and CDBG programs, and other Housing Division programs, meet during the plan development process to review the status of the annual Action Plan and Five-Year Plan. In addition, other agencies, such as the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MDNRC), Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (MDPHHS), Montana Department of Labor and Industry (MDLI), and other interested parties, including the Montana Continuum of Care for the Homeless Coalition, are solicited as needed for input on specific topics contained in the Action Plan and supporting studies.

The **Housing Coordinating Team (HCT)** chartered by MDOC, facilitates statewide coordination in the delivery of housing services to individual housing providers and local organizations. In the past, areas of cooperation included evaluating the coordinating monitoring requirements within MDOC programs, and making minor adjustments to the

common application for housing projects. Participating organizations include MDOC and Public Health and Human Services, local HUD field office, USDA-RD, nonprofit housing providers, local housing authorities, Tribal housing authorities, and other nonprofit organizations. For more information on the HCT and its activities, go to **http://housing.mt.gov/FAR/HCT/default.mcpx.**

Formed to address infrastructure issues, the **Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team** (W_2ASACT) is comprised of state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations that finance, regulate, and/or provide technical assistance for infrastructure, principally drinking water and wastewater systems. W_2ASACT explores and coordinates a wide range of activities focused on improving the environmental infrastructure of local governments and unincorporated communities across Montana. W_2ASACT regularly sponsors and coordinates annual seminars statewide to explain the various financial programs and resources available to assist local governments in funding their infrastructure needs. Civil engineers, local government representatives, and technical assistance providers work with W_2ASACT to identify comprehensive processes and procedures that can help streamline the application and project implementation process for small rural communities. More information on W_2ASACT and its activities can be found at **http://dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/ResourceDevelopment/wasact/.**

MDOC works closely with the **Montana Economic Developers Association** (MEDA) to further economic development efforts by local governments, local development groups, and public and private development partners. MEDA is a coordinator for statewide economic development workshops that provides training to economic developers. MEDA provides the platform for the network and communication system to disseminate information and interchange of ideas for state, regional, national, and international economic development organizations and agencies. Go to **http://www.medamembers.org/**.

In addition, staff from MDOC and Public Health and Human Services regularly attend and participate in meetings held by a number of organizations around the state. Organizations include, but are not limited to, the following:

The **Montana Continuum of Care Coalition** (MT CoC) is a statewide collaboration of diverse homeless service providers, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments working together to implement the McKinney-Vento Act, including changes now being implemented by the HEARTH Act. The coalition formed in 1997 and continues today with support from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. For more information on Montana's CoC, go to **https://sites.google.com/site/montanacoc/**

The **Montana Home Choice Coalition** is a coalition of Montana citizens working together to create better housing opportunities for Montana citizens with disabilities. A.W.A.R.E., Inc. coordinates the Coalition, which develops new housing and resources directly and in partnership with other entities, provides education, advocacy and housing counseling, and collects data to support its goal of creating better housing choices for

Montanans with disabilities. More information on the **Home Choice Coalition** can be found at **http://www3.aware-inc.org/awareinc/montanahomechoice/main.asp**

NeighborWorks Montana (NWMT) is a collaborative partnership of housing organizations. Service delivery partners provide homebuyer education and homeownership planning throughout the state. Participating partners provide financial support, loan capital, and volunteers for the NWMT board of directors. Homebuyer education, foreclosure prevention, housing counseling, and homeownership planning is funded by MBOH. NWMT also provides down payment assistance for low- and moderate-income first time homebuyers on a statewide basis, supports the development of new housing opportunities through project predevelopment loans, and provides technical assistance for the purchase of resident-owned cooperatives (ROCs) and for the formation and operation of community land trusts. Go to **http://www.nwmt.org/index.htm** for more information.

Montana Fair Housing, Inc. (MFH) is a private, full service, non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of housing discrimination, and the advancement of civil rights. The mission of MFH is to promote fair housing throughout Montana and elsewhere. Among MFH's specific purposes and goals is the promotion of equal opportunity in all housing related transactions, and to ensure all housing is available on a non-discriminatory basis. In addition, MFH supports the pursuit and expansion of all civil rights available in Montana and throughout the United States. MFH serves housing providers and consumers across the state, responding to inquiries and discriminatory housing complaints, providing information and support to consumers and industry representatives, and investigating allegations of discrimination in housing. MFH counsels victims of housing discrimination and assists them in filing federal and state administrative complaints. More information on MFH can be found at: **http://www.montanafairhousing.org/**

MDOC supports the **Montana Financial Education Coalition** (MFEC) by sitting on its board of directors and providing assistance to its activities. MFEC strives to improve the personal financial knowledge and decision-making ability of Montana citizens by promoting public awareness of the need for personal financial education, and by uniting and building capacity of financial education programs. MFEC is a collection of financial institutions, government and non-profit organizations, businesses, and interested individuals who believe that financial literacy is essential to economic advancement. MFEC is an affiliate of the National Jump$tart Coalition but is not limited to only assisting youth. MFEC's efforts reach out to Montanans of all age groups and financial situations. More information on MFEC is available at **http://www.mtmfec.org/.**

MBOH is also a member of the **Montana American Indian Housing Task Force**, made up of representatives from Montana Indian Housing Authorities, state and federal agencies, and private sector lenders. The Task Force serves to communicate important news and ideas about how better to meet the housing needs of Montana's Native Americans, including helping to design and schedule training sessions at state housing conferences, and work with federal agencies in planning workshops and conferences targeted to providing housing in Indian country. The task force was also instrumental in

getting most of Montana's reservations qualified for the HUD 184 Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program.

The **Tri-State Housing Environments for Living Positively** (Tri-State HELP) Program and the **Tri-State Housing Environments for Living Positively Plus** (Tri-State HELP Plus) program are housing assistance programs for people living with HIV/AIDS in the states of Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Tri-State HELP and Tri-State HELP Plus are funded through a competitive Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) grant from HUD. More information on Tri-State HELP is available at: **http://siouxfallshousing.org/index.php?page=tri-state-help.**

The 1999 Montana Legislature created the **Mental Health Oversight Advisory Council** (MHOAC) to provide guidance and oversight to the Public Health and Human Services in the development and management of an effective public health system. MHOAC membership includes consumers of mental health services including those who currently receive or formerly received public mental health services, immediate family members of recipients of mental health services, advocates for consumers or family members of consumers, the public at large, mental health service providers, legislators, and department representatives. Additional information on MHOAC is available online at **http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/boardscouncils/mentalhealth.shtml.**

In response to the growing problem of homelessness in Montana, the Montana Council on Homelessness (MTCoH) was convened by Executive Order in June 2004. Governor Brian Schweitzer renewed Montana's commitment to ending homelessness through Executive Order 40-2006, signed in December 2006. The order restructured the MTCoH and extended it until December 2008. It also directed the MTCoH to work with an Intergovernmental Team on Homelessness (ITH). As requested by the MTCoH, all state agencies providing services to homeless individuals participated on the ITH. Additionally, the MTCoH invited representatives of federal, tribal, and local agencies who provide services to the homeless to participate on the Intergovernmental Team on Homelessness. The ITH assisted the MTCoH in preparing and implementing a 10-year plan to end homelessness.

Subsequent to the Montana Council on Homelessness, the Montana Coalition for the Homeless has come into being. Although at an early stage in its development, the Coalition's plans are ambitious. Its stated purpose is "to prevent and end homelessness in Montana". It will leverage work completed by the Governor's Council as the jumping off point for continued direct planning and effort. It will utilize resources from the private and public sectors while partnering with State and Federal agencies. In addition, a MTCoH will make a concerted effort to ensure individuals with direct experience of being homeless have a voice in the process. More information on MTCoH is available at **http://www.mtcoh.org/**.

Finally, MDOC solicits other state agencies, such as the Montana Departments of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources and Conservation, Revenue, Labor and Industry, and Public Health and Human Services, as needed for input on specific topics contained in the action plan and supporting studies.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

MDOC began gathering information for the 2014 Annual Action Plan by offering the public and stakeholders two opportunities to comment on the HUD-approved 2013 plan, which was used to develop the draft 2014 plan. The first public input meeting took place on May 22, 2013, at the Montana Housing Conference in Missoula at the Holiday Inn Parkside. The meeting was conducted as a webinar to provide an opportunity for people not attending the conference in person. In advance of the conference, the consolidated plan coordinator wrote articles promoting citizen participation at the public meeting. The articles were published in the newsletters of the Montana Association of Counties (MACo), the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA), Neighborworks Montana, and Homeword.

The second was Oct. 4, 2013, in Sidney at the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) conference and was also conducted as a webinar. In addition, the consolidated plan coordinator gave a presentation at the Water, Wastewater & Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team's webinar and workshop in Helena on Oct. 17, 2013 to encourage participation in the final public meeting on Dec. 4, 2013. (W_2ASACT is a group of professionals from state, federal, and non-profit organizations that finance, regulate, or provide technical assistance for community water and wastewater systems.)

At multiple times before each public meeting, emails were distributed to the Consolidated Plan mailing list and, two weeks before each meeting, newspaper ads were published in nine of the state's newspapers: Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glendive, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Miles City, and Missoula, covering all areas of Montana, including the eastern part of the state, which is experiencing rapid population growth due to oil and gas development.

Meeting notices also were posted on the *Discovering Montana* E-Calendar and the Consolidated Plan web page.

Public Input Meetings				
Location		**Date**	**Time**	**# Attendees**
Missoula	2013 MT Housing Conference	5/22/13	7:30-8:30 a.m.	50 + 6 staff
Sidney	MEDA Fall Conference	10/4/13	7:45-8:45 a.m.	60 + 7 staff

The Draft 2014 Annual Action Plan, which incorporated public comments from the May 22 and October 4 meetings, was released for public review and comment on November 20, 2013. A final public hearing was held in Helena on December , 2013 and the public comment period was open through January 8, 2014. The comment period was also advertised in 11 of the state's major newspapers. Flyers were sent to the Consolidated Plan mailing list, and meeting notices were posted on the *Discovering Montana* E-Calendar and the Consolidated Plan web page.

Public Review Meetings				
Location		**Date**	**Time**	**# Attendees**
Helena meeting & Webinar	301 S. Park Avenue – Rm 228	12/4/13	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	15 + 11 staff

In addition, as part of the plan update, numerous outside agencies and individuals were contacted. These organizations and individuals were encouraged to provide statistics, data, and other information to aid in preparing the Action Plan and related studies. The public participation plan is included in **Appendix B**.

II. SOURCES OF FUNDS

With MDOC as the lead agency overseeing development, numerous state and federal programs support the implementation of the state's Consolidated Plan. Interagency cooperation and coordination of state, federal, and local agencies and organizations is critical to the success of many projects. The following summaries describe programs supporting the overall implementation of Montana's Consolidated Plan with respect to affordable housing, public facilities, economic development, and homelessness.

FEDERAL RESOURCES

HUD Formula Grants

The state of Montana receives annual funding from three HUD formula grant programs:

- CDBG Program, administered by the Community Development and Business Resources Divisions of MDOC;
- HOME Program, administered by the Community Development Division of MDOC; and
- ESG Program, administered by the Human and Community Services Division of Public Health and Human Services

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

The Community Development and Business Resources Divisions of the Montana Department of Commerce administer the CDBG Program. For the plan year beginning April 1, 2014, the state will receive $5,847,967 in federal CDBG funds, based on the level of funds received in FFY 2013. Of these dollars, MDOC will allocate, at the discretion of the Director, up to 40% for economic development planning and projects.

CDBG

Total FFY 2014 Allocation*	$	5,847,967
Less CDBG Funds For State Program Administration	$	275,439
Amount Available For Award to Local Governments	$	5,572,528

The CDBG Program also anticipates that grantee communities will generate an indeterminate amount of program income. Grantee communities with an approved CDBG program income plan retain the funds for further CDBG-eligible activities. Each year, local governments that receive CDBG program income file a report showing the status of program revenues and expenditures. Any grantees that have open grants will be required to expend program income funds prior to requesting the use of CDBG grant funds.

The MDOC Director, at her discretion, may reallocate unexpended or unawarded CDBG funds in between normal grant application cycles to expedite necessary projects and the expenditure of CDBG funds consistent with the objectives of the Montana Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program

The HOME Program, administered by the Community Development Division, will receive HUD funds for the plan year beginning April 1, 2014. Grantees will use funds to develop affordable housing for low- and very low-income persons.

HOME

	FFY 2014 Allocation	FFY 2013 Actual	FFY 2012 Actual
HUD Allocation	**$ 3,017,887**	**$ 3,000,000**	**$ 3,000,000**
State Program Administration	$300,000	$ 300,000	$ 300,000
Competitive Grants	$ 2,267,887	$ 1,950,000	$ 1,950,000
Retained for State Project Non-Competitive	$ 450,000	$ 750,000	$ 750,000

Additionally, the HOME Program expects that grantees will generate an undetermined amount of program income and/or recaptured funds from previously awarded grants. Under certain limited circumstances, HOME grantees may retain program income and/or recaptured funds generated and use the funds for HOME-eligible activities. Written approval from the HOME Program is required before a grantee can retain and use the funds. Grantees with open grants must use any program income and/or recaptured funds for the open grant before requesting additional funds from the HOME Program.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program

The Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau (IHSB) of the Public Health and Human Services will receive $638,514 for the ESG Program.

ESG

ESTIMATED FFY 2013 Allocation

	Minimum Amount	Maximum Amount
Competitive		
Formula		$ 638,514
Retained for State Project		$ 79,814
Non-Competitive		
State Admin of Program		$ 526,774

HUD Competitive Grants

Competitive grant programs allow eligible applicants to request funding directly from HUD by submitting an application. Each year, HUD's SuperNOFA (Super Notice of Funding Availability) process makes competitive funds available for the selection of proposals submitted by government agencies and nonprofits. These proposals address special projects of national significance and long-term projects in areas that are not eligible for formula allocations.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

Continuums of Care competitive grants provide permanent, transitional housing and supportive services to homeless persons. For FFY 2012, Montana's Continuum of Care received $2,648,326 for 21 projects across the state.

MT-500 Continuum of Care (CoC) Awards

FY 2012

Sponsor Name	Program	Amount
Missoula County	Share House	$147,498
Mountain Home Montana, Inc.	B. Hamilton Project	$78,261
District 7 Human Resources Development Council	Harmony House	$65,085
The YWCA of Helena, Montana	YWCA Exhibit 2 2011 Request	$39,689
Florence Crittenton Home and Services	Pathways to Success	$126,918
Human Resource Development Council of District IX, Inc.	Amos House	$20,400
Samaritan House, Inc.	Samaritan House, Inc.	$64,200
Poverello Center Inc.	Joseph Residence at Maclay Commons	$70,821
God's Love, Inc.	God's Love FTC	$146,171
Supporters of Abuse Free Environments (SAFE), Inc.	SAFE Transitional Housing	$34,680
Human Resources Council, District XII	Homeward Bound	$90,958
Missoula County	Ada's Place Transitional Housing	$100,201
Northwest Montana Human Resources, Inc.	Courtyard Apartments	$36,452

Human Resource Development Council of District IX, Inc.	MT-500-NEW-Family Transitional Housing	$26,310
State of Montana	MTHMIS Project 2012 Funding	$68,320
Montana Department of Commerce	Shelter Plus Care Project # MT01C500001	$257,738
Public Housing Authority of Butte	Public Housing Authority of Butte S+C Program	$93,359
Helena Housing Authority	Helena Housing Authority Shelter Plus Care	$192,232
Housing Authority of Billings	HAB Shelter + Care Renewal 2011	$103,423
Missoula Housing Authority	MHA 102 Shelter Plus Care Renewal 2011	$847,794
Missoula Housing Authority	MHA New Shelter Plus Care Vouchers	$37,816

Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA)

In August 2011, the Public Health and Human Services was awarded a HOPWA three year renewal grant of $1,430,000 to continue operating the Tri-State Housing Environments for Living Positively Program (TS HELP). While serving three states that do not qualify for direct HOPWA formula grant funding, this program is a continuum of housing and related supportive service opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families. TS HELP is a unique collaboration with organizations in the states of North Dakota and South Dakota. The program involves a collaborative partnership with the Missoula AIDS Council, Yellowstone AIDS Project, Sioux Falls Housing and Redevelopment Commission and Community Action Program Region VII.

The Public Health and Human Services was awarded a three-year HOPWA permanent supportive housing renewal grant of $1,429,307 to continue the Tri-State HELP Plus program. The program provides tenant based housing assistance to 56 rural and chronically homeless households living with HIV/AIDS, and short-term mortgage, rent, and utility assistance to 10 households. This effort will sustain a continuum of housing opportunities that coordinates multi-state resource to address the unmet housing needs of predominantly rural households that promotes stable housing and independent living while providing employment opportunities.

Housing Counseling Grant

At the beginning of the federal fiscal year, federal funds were not available for support of Comprehensive Housing Counseling. MBOH contracted with NeighborWorks Montana to continue to provide homebuyer education through the statewide partnership of 25 local non-profit organizations with staff members who are certified Homebuyer Education teachers and HUD housing counselors. The contract stipulates that all services provided continue to meet the national standards for homebuyer education. Subsequent to the beginning of the federal fiscal year, HUD announced the limited availability of Comprehensive Housing Counseling grant funds. MBOH submitted an

application March 19, 2013 and was awarded $494,339 in June 2013 to provide support for comprehensive housing counseling services across the state.

Other HUD Resources

Project Based and Tenant Based Section 8

The MDOC, through its Housing Division, contracts with HUD as the statewide Public Housing Agency (PHA) using an annual contributions contract to provide program administration and services on Section 8 low-income housing programs on a statewide basis.

The Montana Project Based Section 8 (PBS8) program performs as a HUD contractor providing management and oversight activities for 93 contracts involving 4,191 affordable rental units. PBS8 conducts on-site management reviews annually for the entire contract portfolio. In addition, PBS8 approves and processes payment vouchers to property owners and agents.

Financed by HUD and administered by the MDOC Housing Assistance Bureau, Tenant Based Section 8 Housing (TBS8) Assistance programs allow very low-income families to pay a set amount for rent and utilities, based on their gross adjusted income (currently 30%). Very low-income families have incomes of 50% or less of the HUD median family income for the county in which the family resides. HUD establishes income limits annually. The programs provide subsidy payments to property owners on behalf of program participants.

The TBS8 program, using 37 local field agents in 11 locations throughout the state, provides field services: issuing assistance documents, performing inspections, and examining annual income. The statewide wait list to obtain a voucher is roughly 36 months with approximately 11,800 applicants, up from 7,000 in comparison with 2011. The Housing Choice Vouchers is the main program in TBS8, with a HUD baseline of 3,761 units and an annual budget of approximately $15 million.

Calendar year 2013 is subject to sequestration in accordance with the Budget Control Act of 2011, As a result of these requirements, funding is pro-rated at 93.976 % of eligibility. Ultimately, the Section 8 Program's Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) was reduced by over one million dollars. The result is approximately 200 fewer families will be served by the end of the calendar year 2013.

In 2012, the administrative fee was increased through the fee schedule but at the time of actual funding the fee paid at 80% of the proposed fee schedule. In 2013, the administrative fee is being paid at **69%** of the proposed fee schedule. The ongoing reduction of administrative fees will affect the ability of PHAs to administer all the federal requirements pertaining to the Section 8 program.

The Moderate Rehabilitation (Mod Rehab) program is a project-based program containing 331 rental units. TBS8 subsidizes the rental units, provides a list of prospective tenants to owners, and inspects the rental units annually to ensure

continued compliance with HQS. Initially, owners of substandard property in Montana rehabilitated the property to meet HUD housing quality standards (HQS) and received subsidized rent for 15 years at a rate high enough to cover the debt service on rehabilitation loans. All Mod Rehab properties are past the 15-year period and have moved to annual contracts. The HUD approved and funded amount for FY 2011 is $1.7 million.

Go to **http://housing.mt.gov/About/section8/default.mcpx** for more information on the statewide Section 8 Programs.

HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Voucher Program

The 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 110-161) enacted December 26, 2007, provided $75 million dollars of funding for the HUD-VASH voucher program as authorized under section 8(o)(19) of the United Stated Housing Act of 1937. The HUD–VASH program combines HUD housing choice voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Veterans Affairs at its medical centers and in the community.

MDOC was able to provide 35 vouchers to assist homeless veterans and their families through a partnership with Veterans Affairs' Homeless Veteran Program, located at Fort Harrison, with branch offices in Missoula and Billings. The Billings Housing Authority has an additional 100 vouchers. In 2010, and again in 2011, MDOC received 25 additional vouchers, allowing increased assistance to veterans in Western Montana. In 2012, an additional 50 vouchers were awarded to MDOC to serve Great Falls, the highline, Butte, Bozeman, and Helena. In 2013, an additional 55 vouchers were awarded bringing the total MDOC VASH vouchers to 190.

The VASH program helps support the federal goal in the HEARTH Act to ensure that individuals and families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 30 days.

HUD-Permanent Supportive Housing Vouchers

Since 1997, the Montana Continuum of Care has applied for and received grants that now provide for 287 Permanent Supportive Housing beds across Montana. Shelter Plus Care provides permanent supportive housing for persons or families with serious disabilities and for the chronically homeless.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

Title III of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA) [HR 3221] created the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP1). Section 2301 of Title III provided assistance to states and targeted cities for assisting in the redevelopment, revitalization and stabilization of foreclosed and abandoned homes. Montana received the minimum allocation of $19.6 million. On July 26, 2010 The Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 provided a third allocation of NSP funds to further the purpose of assisting in the redevelopment of abandoned or vacant foreclosed homes. Montana

received the minimum allocation of NSP3 funds of $5 million. MDOC administers the NSP funds through the Community Development Division.

All NSP1 and NSP3 funds are used to assist low, moderate, and middle-income persons (LMMI). As set forth in the NSP federal regulations, NSP1 and NSP3 funds can be used to:

A: Establish financing mechanisms for purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed upon homes and residential properties, including such mechanisms as soft-seconds, loan loss reserves, and shared-equity loans for low and moderate income homebuyers;

B: Purchase and rehabilitate homes and residential properties that have been abandoned or foreclosed upon, in order to sell, rent or redevelop such homes and properties;

C: Establish land banks for homes that have been foreclosed upon;

D: Demolish blighted structures; and

E: Redevelop demolished or vacant properties.

NSP1 grantees successfully obligated all program funds within the 18-month obligation timeframe, as required by federal statute. By the obligation deadline, eight NSP1 grantees had used NSP1 funds successfully to secure over 225 units of affordable homeownership and/or rental dwellings for low, moderate, and middle-income households. Currently, all eight NSP1 grantees have begun to sell or rent the available units.

NSP3 grantees continue to work toward the full expenditure of NSP funds by the upcoming deadlines in 2014. NSP grantees are completing activities in eligible areas on eligible properties. The NSP programs have provided housing units that are both multi-family rental, multi-family homeownership, and single family homeownership. To date, an undetermined amount of properties will be impacted through the use of these funds as the program has not expended 100% of all funds.

Additional information on the Neighborhood Stabilization Program is available at **http://comdev.mt.gov/NSP/default.mcpx**.

CDBG Recovery (CDBG-R)

Although the funding cycle for 2009 CDBG-R funds has ended, the CDBG-ED program is using proceeds from loans made with CDBG-R funds as program income for its regular CDBG-ED program. All requirements applicable to the CDBG-ED program apply to the use of the program income, with the exception of 2% of the program income received annually which will be withheld for administration costs.

In May 2009, HUD allocated $1 billion in funding to states and local governments through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The purposes of the funding were to stimulate the economy through measures that modernize the

nation's infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, and expand educational opportunities and access to health care.

On July 27, 2009, HUD approved the State of Montana's Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan 2008 Action Plan for CDBG Recovery. The state was awarded $1.8 million, of which $1.5 million was allocated to the Montana Distressed Wood Products Industry Recovery and Stabilization (WPIRS) Program, administered by the MDOC Business Resources Division. The remaining amount of $304,014.73 was allocated to the Community Development Division, which were awarded to Judith Basin County to construct an essential services facility in Judith Basin County.

The Department of Commerce submitted the closeout agreement to HUD this during 2013 plan year and all activities originally funded are completed. Additional CDBG-R funding is not expected to be available during the 2014 plan year.

Other Federal Resources

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, established by Congress in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, provides for retaining, rehabilitating, and constructing low-income rental housing. MBOH administers the LIHTC Program in Montana. MBOH receives authority to allocate the tax credit through the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Annual authority is estimated at $2,500,000. Through the tax credit benefit, developers and owners of qualified housing receive an annual federal tax credit for 10 years, based on the eligible basis costs of the rental units provided to low-income individuals and families. Go to **http://housing.mt.gov/About/MF/lihtc.mcpx** for more information.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program regularly funds several different housing programs for very-low-, low-, and moderate-income borrowers. These programs are the Single Family Housing Direct Loans (502), Repair and Rehab Loans and Grants (504), and Guaranteed Rural Housing Loans. Additionally, RD funds Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans and Guarantees, Rural Rental Assistance**,** Mutual Self-Help Grants, Housing Preservation Grants, and Community Facilities Grants and Loans. More information on Rural Development's housing and community facilities programs in Montana is available at **http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/MT_Home.html**.

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

The U.S. Department of Energy funds are primarily for weatherization assistance in the state. These funds leverage additional funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, NorthWestern Energy, Bonneville Power Administration, and USB/MDU (Universal System Benefits/Montana Dakota Utilities) funds for the weatherization program as well as LIEAP (Low Income Energy Assistance Program). The weatherization program provides cost effective energy conservation measures for low-income households, and typically include heating system tune-ups, air infiltration

reduction, and attic, wall and floor insulation. The MDPHHS Human and Community Services Bureau administers the program. For information is available at: **http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/programsservices/energyassistance/**.

U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA)

The CDBG Economic Development Program applied to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration in 1991 for economic development funding, matched with CDBG funds, to develop a state revolving loan fund. Revolving loan fund dollars are used independently, or in combination with CDBG funding, for economic development loans. Loan payments are deposited back into the EDA/CDBG revolving loan fund for future projects.

NeighborWorks America National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling Program

NeighborWorks America is a network of housing and neighborhood revitalization chapters across the country that receives direct funding from the federal budget. As part of the efforts to combat escalating foreclosure rates across the country, Congress approved direct funding to NeighborWorks America to administer a competitive grant program for foreclosure counseling. MBOH applied for and received funds through this program, including an award of $10,000 for place-based counselor training on January 11, 2011, $195,262 as part of Round 5 in June 2011, and submitted an application on January 27, 2012 for additional funds under Round 6 and was awarded $119,634. MBOH contracts with NeighborWorks Montana to provide HUD-certified foreclosure counselors across the state. The funds from this grant are used to support direct foreclosure counseling services to clients across the state.

STATE RESOURCES

Resources provided by the state also play a critical role in meeting community development needs around Montana.

Montana Department of Commerce

MDOC's mission, through its employees, community partners, public outreach, and media contacts, is to enhance economic prosperity in Montana; foster community lead diversification and sustainability of a growing economy; maintain and improve our infrastructure, housing and facilities; and promote and enhance Montana's positive national and international image. This mission is enhanced and supported through a variety of funding and technical assistance programs at MDOC.

Montana Board of Housing

Administratively attached to MDOC, the Housing Act of 1975 created MBOH in order to alleviate the high cost of housing for low-income persons and families. Funds are generated through the sale of tax-exempt bonds, loans, and administrative fees. MBOH programs fall into three categories: homeownership, multi-family projects, and assistance to the senior population. MBOH programs are often used in combination with

HOME and CDBG funds, where MBOH provides the permanent financing or equity financing. For more information, visit MBOH's website at **http://housing.mt.gov/About/MBOH/default.mcpx.**

Homeownership Programs

Homeownership programs include: the Bond Program, which generally provides below market, low or no down payment, fixed rate mortgages to qualified first-time homebuyers; Mortgage Credit Certificate Program, which helps qualified first-time homebuyers reduce their federal income taxes; many set-aside Programs, which help Montana families who cannot qualify for loans through the Bond Program; and the Montana House™. More information on MBOH homeownership programs is available on the website at **http://housing.mt.gov/About/homeownership/default.mcpx**.

Homeownership will face two challenges in the coming year. While Montana's level of foreclosures from subprime lending is relatively low, the economic downturn in the state's economy is increasing the frequency of foreclosures, especially in Flathead, Gallatin and Ravalli Counties, on many of the Tribal Reservations, and in the three MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Areas), Missoula, Great Falls, and Billings. MBOH supports a network of foreclosure counselors through its own funds, HUD Homeownership Counseling and National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program grant funds. These counselors are available at no charge to assist any homebuyer who is facing foreclosure or anticipating difficulty in making their mortgage payments.

The second challenge is the tightening of credit and credit standards to support first-time homebuyers. MBOH supports a network of certified homebuyer education and counseling providers across the state to assist first-time homebuyers with information and counseling about what is needed to qualify for a home loan, and what is involved in locating and financing a home. Home purchase costs have stabilized and even declined slightly in a few areas of the state. With tighter credit and down payment requirements, it is likely that fewer households will be purchasing homes than in the past. Additionally, ongoing affordability gaps and higher down payment requirements will likely increase the amount of assistance needed by each household, thereby lowering the total number of homebuyers receiving down payment assistance and buying homes.

Homeownership Mortgage Revenue Bond (MRB) Program: Begun in 1977, the purpose of the Homeownership Mortgage Revenue Bond Program (formerly known as the Single Family Bond Program) is to assist low- and moderate-income Montanans to purchase homes in the state. MBOH issues tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds to provide below market rate funds either to purchase existing housing or to construct new housing. Primarily, this program is intended to be utilized by first-time homebuyers; however, in certain "targeted" areas, the borrowers do not need to be first-time buyers. Certain income requirements and house price restrictions must be met. Loan fund availability and mortgage rates vary with each new bond issue.

Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) Program: The MCC Program, which began operation in April 2003, allows a qualified homebuyer to claim up to 20% of annual mortgage interest paid as a federal income tax credit. The remaining mortgage interest (80%)

continues to qualify as an itemized deduction. The MCC may be used in conjunction with any conventional fixed or adjustable rate loan, FHA, VA or RD loans, or privately insured mortgage loans statewide including loans made in Tribal Reservations, except for loans made through MBOH bond or set-aside programs.

Set-aside Homeownership Mortgage Program: MBOH makes mortgage funds available through the recycling of mortgage prepayments and other funds held under prior bond issues of the Homeownership MRB Program. MBOH works in partnership with local nonprofit housing providers and local governments to develop programs to target specific housing needs within the local community. MBOH provides the permanent, fixed-rate rate, 30-year mortgage financing. This is often coupled with federal grants or local funds to assist in making homeownership more affordable for lower income individuals and families. Applications are submitted through the MBOH's "Request for Proposal" process on a monthly basis.

Disabled Accessible Affordable Homeownership Program: MBOH initiated this program in 1993 to assist persons with disabilities to acquire affordable, architecturally accessible homes. To qualify for the program, an eligible homebuyer, spouse, child, or parent must have a permanent physical disability with a mobility impairment (access disability), meet income and family asset limits, and be a first-time homebuyer or have a home purchased prior to the disability that is no longer accessible to their needs. Interest rates vary depending on the buyer's annual income.

Montana House™: The Montana House™ program is a collaboration between MBOH and local vocational training programs. MBOH provides the building materials for the homes and students build the homes as part of their vocational training. The homes are available for purchase by individuals or families who meet the Homeownership MRB Program criteria. The following are programs operating currently:

- Blackfeet Housing Authority and Blackfeet Manpower
- Fort Belknap College

The Montana House™ is a three-bedroom, two-bath new home that is available in four different floor plans: 960 sq ft, 1008 sq ft, 1200 sq ft, or 1400 sq ft. Each home features 2x6 exterior walls with R-19 insulation, quality vinyl windows, oak kitchen and bath cabinets and energy efficient gas forced air furnace. The home comes complete except for appliances and flooring, which the homebuyer provides. The homebuyer is also responsible for the lot, foundation, moving from the building site, placement on the foundation and utility hook-ups and fees. NeighborWorks Montana (NWMT) provides technical assistance for these functions.

Multi-Family Programs

MBOH issues tax-exempt bonds to finance the construction of new and rehabilitation of existing low-income, multi-family housing. MBOH issues the bonds to finance projects that meet its requirements through the Multi-Family Risk Sharing Program and General Obligation Bond Program. Go to **http://housing.mt.gov/About/MF/default.mcpx** for more information on MBOH multi-family programs.

Risk Share Loan Program: The Risk Sharing program provides FHA mortgage insurance for the permanent financing of multi-family rental property through a partnership between MBOH and HUD. Through this program, MBOH provides mortgage underwriting, loan management, and financing, and the two entities share the risk of loss from default. MBOH received final approval to participate in the Risk Sharing Program with HUD in June 1994.

General Obligation (G.O.) *Program*: The G.O. bond program provides permanent mortgage financing for multi-family rental property. The program requires that the rental property owner agree to restrict the rents to a specific amount and to rent only to tenants below a maximum income level (generally 60% of median income). Currently this program is financing the permanent loans for projects receiving multiple sources of funding where rents on the projects are affordable to very low-income state residents.

Conduit Bond Program: The conduit bond program provides another vehicle for financing acquisition and or rehabilitation of affordable multi-family housing. MBOH makes tax exempt bonds available for purchase by a financial institution, which in turn, makes loans to MBOH for approved projects in Montana. Application parameters are the same as those for Low Income Housing Tax Credits and are eligible for tax credits at approximately 4% or the prevailing monthly federal rate. These tax credits are not subject to a competitive selection process as with those made available through the U.S. Treasury (IRS) but must comply with Section 42 of the IRS codes and state requirements. This program provides resources for retaining or adding additional affordable housing for Montana.

Housing Montana Fund: The Montana Legislature passed the Affordable Housing Revolving Loan Fund into law during the 1999 legislative session; however, funding was not provided at that time. The 2001 Montana Legislature appropriated $500,000 in Section 8 reserves and $700,000 of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds and allowed direct donations as a source of funding. The Affordable Housing Revolving Loan Fund was renamed the Housing Montana Fund by the 2007 Legislature. MBOH administers the fund, which can be used to provide financial assistance in the form of direct loans for the following purposes:

- Matching funds for public or private money available from other resources for developing low-income and moderate-income housing
- Bridge financing necessary to make a low-income or a moderate-income housing development feasible
- Acquisition of existing housing for the purpose of preserving or converting to low-income or moderate-income housing
- Pre-construction technical assistance to eligible recipients in rural areas and small cities and towns.

Organizations eligible for loans from the revolving loan fund are state and local governments, state agencies or programs, tribal governments, local housing authorities, nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, regional or statewide

nonprofit housing assistance organizations, or for-profit housing developers. All interest and principal on loans, which have a 30-year term, must be repaid to the loan fund.

Senior Assistance

Reverse Annuity Mortgage (RAM) Loan Program: The RAM Program enables senior Montanans to benefit from an additional monthly income source by borrowing against the equity in their home. Eligibility is subject to certain age and income requirements. An applicant(s) must be 68 years of age or older (some exceptions may apply). Loans of $15,000 to $150,000 are available at a 5% interest rate, based on 80% of the FHA-determined property value. The loans do not require repayment as long as the homeowner remains in the home. Information on the MBOH RAM Loan Program is available at **http://housing.mt.gov/About/MF/ram.mcpx**.

Business Resources Division

The Business Resources Division (BRD) is comprised of a variety of programs aimed at improving, enhancing, and diversifying Montana's economic and business climate. Visit **http://businessresources.mt.gov** for more information on BRD.

Indian Country Economic Development (ICED): ICED funds from MDOC were made available to tribal governments beginning October 2005. The 59th Montana Legislature made funds available to support tribal business development projects, workforce training projects, entrepreneurial training, feasibility studies, and other types of economic development projects. The ICED program is currently funded by the state Legislature. See the program's website at **http://iced.mt.gov**.

Primary Sector Workforce Training Grant (WTG): The 59th Montana Legislature transferred the administration of the WTG program, established during the 2003 legislative session, from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity to MDOC. For the 2013-2014 biennium the State Legislature will make $1.2 million available for the WTG program for training of new workers in primary sector businesses paying the average wage that meets or exceeds the lesser of 170% of Montana's current minimum wage, or the current average weekly wage of the county. See the program's website at **http://wtg.mt.gov**.

Big Sky Trust Fund (BSTF): The BSTF was created by the 2005 Montana Legislature to aide in the development of good-paying jobs for Montana residents and to promote long-term, stable economic growth in Montana. Interest earnings from the trust fund are available for financial assistance to local governments and economic development organizations through application to MDOC. Seventy-five percent of trust fund earnings are awarded annually to local governments in the form of grants and loans for economic development projects that create new qualifying jobs for Montana residents and 25% for economic development planning activities. See the program's website at: **http://bstf.mt.gov**.

Wood Products Revolving Loan Fund: The Wood Product Revolving Loan Fund is a federal- and state-funded, statewide loan program designed to help businesses in the

wood products industry retain or create jobs. The program was established in 2009 to respond to the sudden and severe economic downturn of the national economy, and the lowered demand for wood products. The loan program targeted parts of the state where timber jobs were most threatened, particularly in counties with lumber mills and similar facilities. See the program's website at: **http://recovery.mt.gov/commerce/wpirs**.

With approximately $11 million awarded in 2009, the WPIRS program is comprised of three funding sources:

1) Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce
2) CDBG-ED Program, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
3) Montana Department of Commerce General Fund (State WPIRS)

The CDBG WPIRS Program is designed to stimulate economic development activity by providing grant funding to local governments for loan and grant assistance to timber and wood product related businesses impacted by the current recession. It is the goal of the program to create and retain jobs in the Montana wood products Industry. The CDBG WPIRS program made 5 loans to timber related businesses.

Additional CDBG-R funding is not expected to be available during the 2014 plan year.

Montana State Small Business Credit Initiative Program

The Montana State Small Business Credit Initiative Program has been created using funds received from the US Department of Treasury as part of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. Montana used $12.6 million to create a new loan program with the intent to generate at least $10 in new small business lending for every $1 of Treasury funds. Funds have assisted Montana businesses that needed additional loans for real estate, equipment, working capital, lines of credit, and non-speculative business ventures. See the program's website at: **http://mtssbci.mt.gov**.

Community Development Division

The grant and technical assistance programs of the Community Development Division (CDD) support the orderly, productive, and coordinated community development of Montana communities. In particular, CDD administers the following programs to support the mission of MDOC:

1) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Housing and Public Facilities
2) HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)
3) Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)
4) Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP)
5) Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP)
6) Quality Schools Grant Program
7) Montana Main Street Program

8) Two administratively attached citizen boards, members appointed by the Governor
    - Montana Coal Board
    - Montana Hard Rock Mining Impact Board

Overall, the CDD programs seek to promote viable, sustainable communities and the provision of cost-effective and efficient community services and facilities by encouraging well-planned community growth and development. The efforts of CDD are consistent with sustainability, affordability, efficiency, and effectiveness. In particular, CDD provides grants to:

- Help ensure safe, clean, and drinkable water is available, wastewater systems do not pollute and degrade state waters, and bridges provide safe transportation;
- Help ensure community-based public services are safe and efficient and, in many cases, more energy efficient;
- Help ensure affordable housing is available for low- and moderate-income families;
- Enhance the quality of life and protect the health, safety, and welfare of Montana's public residents;
- Assist in the development of comprehensive growth plans, housing studies, revitalization strategies and similar planning documents to facilitate sustainable growth and development throughout Montana communities and help prioritize projects and measures to benefit communities through the provision of public services and facilities;
- Strengthen government-to-government relationships with Montana's tribes through technical assistance

Additional information on the Community Development Division is available at **http://comdev.mt.gov/default.mcpx**.

Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP): CTAP provides technical assistance to encourage the planning and sustainable development of Montana communities by working with local governments, planning departments, private developers, non-profit organizations and the public. CTAP brings a statewide and national problem-solving perspective to every community by staying abreast of how other local governments, the private sector, and the courts are handling specific land use and planning-related issues. While CTAP is available to serve communities and constituents statewide, particular focus has recently been placed on communities experiencing land use impacts and resulting infrastructure needs related to rapid population growth as a result of oil and gas development. CTAP provides assistance in the following ways:

1) Direct Assistance. CTAP staff works directly with local government officials, planning staff, private industry and members of the public by:

- Providing legal advice and professional guidance on planning issues and activities including but not limited to growth policies and comprehensive plans, subdivision regulations, zoning, municipal annexations, exemptions and other statutory requirements;
- Developing and distributing legal updates summarizing court decisions impacting land use in Montana;
- Assisting developers, surveyors, engineers, and planners to understand statutes and case law governing land use planning in Montana;
- Reviewing plans and regulations to ensure compliance with statute and professional standards;
- Conducting research to help resolve particular local or statewide land use planning issues or questions.

2) Publications. CTAP publishes and distributes publications for use by local governments engaged in land use planning, including but not limited to the Model Subdivision Regulations, Growth Policy Handbook and Planning Board Member's Handbook.

3) GIS Mapping. CTAP provides electronic and printed maps to initiate or implement planning processes as well as analyze land use scenarios, including but not limited to the development of a growth policy or zoning regulations.

4) Local Government Training Workshops. CTAP sponsors and conducts training workshops on various planning topics including but not limited to planning board procedure and open meeting law, drafting or updating a growth policy, administering subdivision regulations or developing a zoning ordinance, where participants can learn and exchange ideas and experiences.

Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP): TSEP is a state-funded grant program designed to assist local governments construct and repair drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary or storm sewer systems, solid waste disposal and separation systems, and bridges in order to solve serious public health and safety problems. Eligible applicants for TSEP include any incorporated city or town, county, consolidated government, tribal government, and county or multi-county water, sewer or solid waste management district. The program provides grants for construction projects, infrastructure planning, and emergency situations.

Construction grants typically require a dollar-for-dollar match; however, the match can include other federal, state or local funding sources. Applicants are limited to requesting a maximum of $750,000 for a construction project. MDOC reviews and ranks the construction grant applications each biennium based on seven statutory priorities. TSEP rankings are submitted to the Governor, who submits final recommendations to the Legislature for funding through the legislative process.

During the 2013 legislative session TSEP was appropriated funding for 64 infrastructure projects. Additionally, the program has been appropriated $900,000 for infrastructure

planning grants and $100,000 for emergency grants through the legislative process. As of the fall of 2013, MDOC awarded 67 noncompetitive infrastructure planning grants to assist Montana communities in planning for and prioritizing future infrastructure needs and projects, including water, wastewater, storm water and bridge infrastructure. All of the awarded funds must further planning efforts to improve infrastructure in the state. No emergency funding has been awarded but is available to eligible applicants who experience an unexpected public health and safety emergency, such as flooding. For more information, please visit: **http://comdev.mt.gov/TSEP/default.mcpx**.

Quality Schools Grant Program: The Quality Schools Grant Program is a state-funded grant program designed to assist public school districts to construct, repair or upgrade school facilities through a competitive grant process for planning and school facility grants. The program also awards funds to address emergency health and safety needs. Eligible applicants include K-12, elementary, and high school districts in Montana.

Quality Schools staff rank project grant applications each biennium according to six statutory priorities and five statutory attributes. Project rankings are submitted to the Governor, who submits final recommendations to the Legislature for funding through the legislative process. During the 2013 legislative session Quality Schools was appropriated funding for 30 school facility projects.

Additionally, the program has been appropriated $900,000 for planning grants and $100,000 for emergency grants through the legislative process. MDOC awards competitive facility planning grants to public school districts in planning for and prioritizing future facility needs and projects that may include, but are not limited to new construction or expansion of the facility, energy efficiency improvements or technology upgrades. No emergency funding has been awarded but is available to eligible applicants who experience unexpected public health and safety emergency. For more information, please visit: **http://commerce.mt.gov/qualityschools/default.mcpx**.

Montana Main Street Program: The Montana Main Street program, provided for in Section 90-1-151, MCA and funded with state general funds and is the state affiliate of the National Trust Main Street Center. The Montana Main Street Program provides technical assistance and training in the areas of economic development, downtown revitalization and historic preservation to communities of all sizes. In addition, the Montana Main Street program sponsors regional workshops and community training sessions, and is an active participant in the annual Downtown Conference, which offers the most comprehensive downtown development and historic preservation gathering in the state.

In the summer of 2013, MDOC initiated a new collaborative economic development effort between the Montana Office of Tourism and Community Development Division to continue to provide technical assistance, workshops, educational outreach, and grant opportunities to help revitalize Montana's historic business communities through the Montana Main Street Program. The collaboration combines the Montana Office of Tourism's goal to create and maintain vibrant and charming Montana towns that serve as gateways to Montana's natural wonders, with the Community Development Division's

mission to offer safe, efficient, and quality public facilities, including streets, water and sewer services, and schools; affordable and attractive housing and neighborhoods; excellent health care facilities and social services; a vibrant economy; and job opportunities across Montana. In FY 2012, the Montana Main Street program provided grant funds and/or technical assistance to 18 designated and affiliate Main Street communities in the form of design guideline development, historic preservation assistance, heritage tourism plans, marketing and branding assistance, land use planning, historic building surveys, retail display assistance, and business and volunteer recruitment strategies. It also allowed the Main Street Program to begin to focus resources on addressing downtown revitalization efforts where Main Street affiliate communities and others interested in joining the program are either beginning to experience or anticipate impacts from rapid population growth resulting from oil and gas development and are in the early stages of considering land use planning tools for addressing this growth. **http://mtmainstreet.mt.gov/default.mcpx**

Coal Board: A seven-member board, appointed by the Governor, holds quarterly public meetings to award funding that will assist those communities that demonstrate need and high impact associated with coal mining. Administratively attached to MDOC, the Montana Legislature created the Coal Board in 1975 with the adoption of the Coal Severance Tax. Its purpose is to aid local governmental units, which have been required to expand the provision of adequate public services and facilities because of large-scale development of coalmines or coal using energy complexes and with the costs associated with the decline or closure of large-scale developments and coal using energy complexes. The legislature appropriated approximately $3.9 million to the Coal Board for the 2015 biennium. For more information, visit **http://comdev.mt.gov/COAL/default.mcpx**.

Hard Rock Mining Impact (HRMI) Board: The HRMI Board, a five-member, quasi-judicial board appointed by the Governor, is attached to MDOC for administrative purposes. The HRMI Board administers the Hard-Rock Mining Impact Act and the companion Property Tax Base Sharing Act (PTBS), provides technical assistance with metal mines license tax distributions, and adjudicates disputes between affected entities. The purpose of HRMI and PTBS Acts is to mitigate the local government service, facility and fiscal impacts from new large-scale hard-rock mineral developments in the state. Mineral developers and affected local governments prepare and implement impact plans intended to ensure that local government services and facilities are available when and where needed because of new mineral developments, without imposing additional costs on the existing local taxpayer. The developer pays new capital and net operating costs through prepaid property taxes with a subsequent tax credit, grants, or facility impact bonds. Under specified circumstances, affected entities may petition the HRMI Board to amend approved impact plans. For more information, visit **http://comdev.mt.gov/HRM/default.mcpx**.

Montana Board of Investments

INTERCAP Revolving Loan Program: The INTERCAP Revolving Loan program provides loans to Montana local governments and state agencies, including the university system, for a wide variety of purposes. Eligible borrowers, authorized by

Montana law, may borrow to finance projects, including but not limited to: energy retrofit projects, real property purchase & improvements, new and used equipment of all kinds, new and used vehicles of all kinds, water, wastewater, and solid waste projects, preliminary engineering and grant writing work, interim financing for construction or cash-flow loans, and rural and special improvement districts. **http://www.investmentmt.com/default.mcpx**

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Energy Funds. Public Health and Human Services offers two programs to help low-income individuals reduce their heating costs. The Weatherization Program helps participants to improve the heating efficiency of their homes and thus reduce their energy consumption. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) pays part of winter energy bills for eligible people. Most utilities offer LIEAP recipients discounts on their bills. Individuals and families residing in subsidized housing with utilities included in their rent may apply for a one-time $50 LIEAP benefit, which qualifies them to receive increased food stamp benefits for a five-year period.

Eligibility for weatherization and fuel assistance is based on the households' income and assets. Both homeowners and renters may apply for these programs. If a household receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits or from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, the household may qualify automatically for weatherization or fuel assistance. For more information, go to **http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/programsservices/energyassistance/index.shtml.**

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MDNRC)

Renewable Resources Grant and Loan (RRGL) Program. The Renewable Resources Grant and Loan Program provides grant and loan funds to governmental entities for renewable resource projects that preserve, conserve, manage, and develop renewable resources. The Resource Development Bureau of MDNRC administers the program. Grant funding is limited to $100,000, and loan funds are available to the limit of the borrower's bonding authority. Interest subsidies for large loans are available subject to legislative approval. The RRGL Program has $4.0 million available for grant funding each biennium. The applications are typically due in the spring of even numbered years. Project planning grants are available to provide funding for preliminary engineering and technical analysis needed to identify alternatives for projects that qualify for the renewable resource grant and loan program. Grants of up to $25,000 are available, with no match requirement. Emergency grants of up to $30,000 are available on an open cycle for projects that, if delayed, will result in substantial harm to public health or the environment. For more information, go to
http://dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/LoansGrants/Default.asp

LEVERAGING AND MATCHING OF FEDERAL DOLLARS

Federal funds will continue to be leveraged with nonfederal resources to achieve the objectives of this plan. Matching requirements will be achieved through a variety of methods. Grant recipients are encouraged to utilize funds from the private sector, state and local programs, and other sources to assist in meeting HUD matching requirements and to increase the amount of funds available to provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, improve infrastructure, and provide community facilities.

Community Development Block Grant

CDBG public facility grant recipients are required to contribute matching or leveraged funds equal to at least 25% of the total CDBG funds requested. The match is provided either by a direct cash contribution or by incurring a loan or issuing bonds to be repaid through user charges or property tax assessments. Grant recipients are allowed to apply grant funds from other state or federal programs toward the match requirement. In all cases matching funds must be documented prior to any expenditure of CDBG funds.

Local matching funds are not required for CDBG housing grants.

For CDBG economic development grants, the local government is required to identify the sources and uses of funds and the amounts to be contributed by each financial source. Applicants to the program must assure the participation of at least one non-CDBG-ED dollar for each dollar of non-administrative CDBG-ED funds requested (a 1:1 leverage ratio). The non-CDBG-ED funds may come from a variety of sources. CDBG-ED no longer requires match in the form of new money, grants, investments, or loans, and will consider as match documented expenses incurred related to the proposal that occurred no more than 18 months prior to the date of the application. MDOC reserves the right to reduce the match requirement in exceptional circumstances, such as high impact projects in areas demonstrating significant levels of need.

For the FFY 2013, CDBG community planning, public facility, and housing planning grants were awarded through a noncompetitive application on a first-come, first served basis. CDBG planning grants are available for a maximum $30,000, and recipients are required to provide a 3:1 cash match (one non-CDBG dollar for every three CDBG dollars) that must be firmly committed by the time CDBG funds are released. The match can come in several forms: funds borrowed from the MBOI INTERCAP Program, local cash reserves, or new cash contributions from other local, state, or federal agencies, programs or private organizations. Previously, in-kind expenses were allowed as match; however, because this type of match is very difficult to track and document for staff, volunteers, and local governments, the CDBG program does not accept in-kind services such as staff or volunteer time as match. Local governments that are having difficulty with the match requirement may request a waiver to reduce or entirely waive the match requirement due to extreme financial hardship. In these cases, the local government must clearly document that there is a need for the planning project and clearly demonstrate that higher financial participation is not possible.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

HUD regulations requires the HOME Program to provide match based on the specific type of housing project being provided. Excess match generated in a fiscal year can be carried forward ("banked") to meet the next year's match obligation. The HOME Program encourages Grantees to identify, document, and report all eligible matching fund, and many of Montana's recipients have contributed a large amount of matching funds with their projects. Specific requirements related to match are contained in the HOME program guidelines, located at **http://housing.mt.gov/HM/default.mcpx**.

Emergency Solutions Grant Program

Recipients of the ESG grant funds are required to match 50% of the grant amount.

III. STATEMENT OF SPECIFIC ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

Table 3A - Summary of Specific Annual Objectives
Plan Year 2014

Specific Obj. #	Outcome/Objective Specific Annual Objectives	Sources of Funds	Performance Indicators	Program Year	Expected Number[1]	Actual Number	Percent Completed
DH-1	**Availability/Accessibility of Decent Housing**						
DH-1.1	Enhance the availability / accessibility of decent housing through assistance for the acquisition / new construction of rental and homeownership units for LMI households	**CDBG**	▪ Number of units acquired and newly constructed	2010	0	48	480%
				2011	0	33	330%
				2012	**12**	0	0%
				2013	12		
				2014	8		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**32**		
DH-2	**Affordability of Decent Housing**						
DH-2.1	Address the need for affordable decent housing by offering rehabilitation assistance to low- and very low-income homeowner households	**HOME** **Local Match**: *5% minimum required*	▪ Number of units rehabilitated ▪ # of units meeting Section 504 standards ▪ # of units qualified as Energy Star	2010	40	13	33%
				2011	40	12	30%
				2012	**40**	0	0
				2013	**40**		
				2014	**40**		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**200**		
DH-2.2	Address the need for affordable decent housing by offering down payment and closing cost assistance to low and very low-income households	**HOME** **Local match**: *5% min. required*	▪ Number of households receiving homebuyer assistance ▪ # of first-time homebuyers ▪ # receiving homebuyer education/ counseling ▪ # coming from subsidized housing	2010	100	66	66%
				2011	100	47	47%
				2012	**100**	40	40%
				2013	100		
				2014	100		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**500**		

[1] Since HOME and CDBG grant funds are primarily distributed through competitive and/or first-come, first-serve processes, the state cannot accurately predict the number of and distribution of grant assistance among specific objectives. The specific number of households, businesses, etc., expected to be assisted each program year is based on the historic number assisted in previous years, adjusted for anticipated declines in funding and rising costs, which may or may not be an accurate reflection of future fund distributions. The reduction in HUD's allocations to the programs affects the number of households served, and projected to be served.

Specific Obj. #	Outcome/Objective Specific Annual Objectives	Sources of Funds	Performance Indicators	Program Year	Expected Number[1]	Actual Number	Percent Completed
DH-2.3	Address the need for affordable decent housing by offering tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) to low- and very low-income households	**HOME** **Local Match**: *5% min. required*	▪ Number of households provided with rental assistance ▪ # designated for the homeless ▪ # for the chronically homeless	2010	50	169	338%
				2011	50	33	66%
				2012	**50**	0	0
				2013	50		
				2014	50		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**250**		
DH-2.4	Address the need for affordable decent housing by offering assistance for the acquisition, rehabilitation and new construction of rental housing to serve low- and very low-income households	**HOME** **Local Match**: *5% min. required*	▪ Number of rental units assisted ▪ # of units meeting Section 504 standards ▪ # of units qualified as Energy Star ▪ # designated for persons with HIV/AIDS ▪ # for the chronically homeless ▪ # designated for the homeless ▪ # for the chronically homeless	2010	115	117	102%
				2011	115	165	143%
				2012	**115**	56	49%
				2013	115		
				2014	115		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**575**		
DH-2.5	Address the need for affordable decent housing through down payment and closing cost assistance to low- and moderate -income households	**CDBG**	▪ Number of households receiving homebuyer assistance	2010	4	0	0%
				2011	4	0	0%
				2012	**0**	0	n.a.
				2013	0		
				2014	0		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**8**		
DH-2.6	Address the need of families facing the possibility of homelessness by providing payments for utilities, rent or deposits through homeless prevention/rapid re-housing programs and services	**ESG**	▪ Number of individuals receiving payments for utilities, rent, or deposits for families facing eviction/shut-off or to provide security/utility deposits, applications fees or rental assistance to enable families to move into a dwelling of their own.	2010	4,000	4,000	100%
				2011	6,000	6,000	100%
				2012	**500**	534	
				2013	500		
				2014	500		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL				
DH-3	**Sustainability of Decent Housing**						
DH-3.1	Improve the sustainability of decent housing through the rehabilitation of homeowner and rental units to benefit LMI households.	**CDBG**	▪ Number of LMI households assisted	2010	50	2	4%
				2011	50	0	0%
				2012	0	0	0%
				2013	0		
				2014	5		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**105**		
SL-1	**Availability/Accessibility of Suitable Living Environment**						
SL-1.1	Enhance the availability / accessibility of suitable living	**CDBG**	▪ Number of persons with new access to the public facility or receiving a service provided	2010	230	0	0%
				2011	230	0	0%

Specific Obj. #	Outcome/Objective Specific Annual Objectives	Sources of Funds	Performance Indicators	Program Year	Expected Number[1]	Actual Number	Percent Completed
	environments through the new construction of public facilities to benefit a geographic area with an LMI percentage of 51% or higher		by the public facility that is no longer substandard	**2012**	**230**	0	0%
				2013	300		
				2014	200		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**1190**		
SL-1.2	Enhance the availability/accessibility of decent housing by offering new construction and rehabilitation of non-rental shelters[2] to LMI households	**CDBG**	▪ Number of units constructed and rehabilitated	2010	0	0	N/A
				2011	0	0	0%
				2012	**0**	0	0%
				2013	0		
				2014	1		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**1**		
SL-1.3	Enhance suitable living environment through availability and accessibility of the central services for adults	**ESG**	▪ Number of adults and children served through community partners from referrals from 2-1-1 information and referral services	2010	6,800	6,800	100%
				2011	6,800	6,800	100%
				2012	**6,800**	7,537	
				2013	1,400		
				2014	1,400		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL				
SL-2	**Affordability of Suitable Living Environment**						
SL-2.1	Improve the affordability of suitable living environment through rehabilitation of existing or new construction of public facilities[3] by targeting direct benefits to serve a specific LMI clientele.	**CDBG**	▪ Number of persons with improved or new access to the public facility or receiving a service provided by the public facility that is no longer substandard	2010	220	11,314	60%
				2011	220	3,608	0%
				2012	**50**	0	
				2013	25		
				2014	20		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**535**		
SL-3	**Sustainability of Suitable Living Environment**						
SL-3.1	Improve the sustainability of suitable living environments through rehabilitation of existing public facilities[4] to benefit a geographic area with an LMI percentage of 51% or higher.	**CDBG**	▪ Number of persons with improved access to the public facility or receiving a service provided by the public facility that is no longer substandard	2010	2,400	0	75%
				2011	2,400	0	0%
				2012	**1,000**	0	
				2013	1,000		
				2014	1,000		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**7,800**		

[2] Youth group homes, domestic violence facilities, mental health facilities, homeless shelters, etc.
[3] Water and wastewater projects, nursing homes, Head Start centers, senior centers, county hospitals, etc.
[4] Water and wastewater projects

Specific Obj. #	Outcome/Objective Specific Annual Objectives	Sources of Funds	Performance Indicators	Program Year	Expected Number[1]	Actual Number	Percent Completed
SL-3.2	Address the need for a suitable living environment by supporting existing facilities providing services as emergency shelters and domestic violence facilities as shelter maintenance programs.	**ESG**	▪ Number of emergency shelters/domestic violence facilities assisted that provide shelter, food and individual support services through Shelter Maintenance funding.	2010	23	23	100%
				2011	23	23	100%
				2012	23	**23**	
				2013	**6**		
				2014	**6**		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL				
EO-1	**Availability/Accessibility of Economic Opportunity**						
EO-1.1	Provide economic opportunity through improved or new availability/accessibility	**CDBG**	▪ Number of loans/grants ▪ Number of new businesses assisted ▪ Number of existing businesses assisted ▪ Number of jobs created ▪ Number of jobs retained	2010	1	1	100%
				2011	1	2	200%
				2012	1	0	0%
				2013	**1**	0	0%
				2014	1		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		5		
EO-2	**Affordability of Economic Opportunity**						
EO-2.1	Provide economic opportunity through improved or new affordability	**CDBG**	▪ Number of loans/grants ▪ Number of new businesses assisted ▪ Number of existing businesses assisted ▪ Number of jobs created ▪ Number of jobs retained	2010	3	3	100%
				2011	3	1	33%
				2012	3	0	0%
				2013	**3**	2	66%
				2014	2		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**14**		
EO-3	**Sustainability of Economic Opportunity**						
EO-3.1	Provide economic opportunity through improved or new sustainability	**CDBG**	▪ **Number of loans/grants** ▪ Number of new businesses assisted ▪ Number of existing businesses assisted ▪ Number of jobs created ▪ Number of jobs retained	2010	3	4	133%
				2011	3	3	100%
				2012	1	0	0%
				2013	2	3	150%
				2014	3		
			MULTI-YEAR GOAL		**12**		
CR-1	**Community Revitalization**						
Not applicable							
O-1	**Other**						
Not applicable							

It should be noted that the federal HUD funding has been declining for several years, while during the same timeframe, costs have continued to escalate due to a variety of factors. The cost of construction materials has increased, and the imposition of lead-based paint requirements has increased the cost and complexity of residential rehabilitation, while extending the production timeframe. In such an environment, it becomes increasingly difficult to attempt to measure performance in light of long-term production goals because the factors and assumptions the goals are based upon simply are not stable or constant over time. However, the performance measures and indicators still have value in that they illustrate the nature and extent of the impacts of the state's HUD-assisted programs on Montana's communities and residents.

IV. OUTCOME MEASURES

Table 3C
Annual Action Plan
Planned Project Results

Outcomes & Objectives*	Performance Indicators	Expected Number[5]	Activity Description
DH-2.1	Number of owner-occupied units rehabilitated	40	Rehabilitation assistance to low- and very low-income homeowners
DH-2.2	Number of homebuyers assisted	100	Down payment & closing cost assistance to low- and very low-income homebuyers
DH-2.3	Number of households assisted	50	Tenant based rental assistance (TBRA)
DH-2.4	Number of rental units acquired, rehabilitated, and constructed	115	Acquisition, rehabilitation, construction of rental units
DH-2.5	Number of homebuyers assisted	0	Down payment & closing cost assistance to low- and moderate -income households
DH-2.6	Number of adults receiving assistance	6,000	Decent housing provided through homeless prevention services and emergency services
DH-3.1	Number of LMI households assisted	5	Rehabilitation of homeowner and rental housing units
SL-1.1	Number of LMI persons with new / improved access	200	New construction of public facilities
SL-1.3	Number of adults assisted	6,800	Assistance provided through shelters that are maintained
SL-2.1	Number of LMI persons with new / improved access	20	Rehabilitation of public facilities that serve a specific clientele
SL-3.1	Number of persons with improved access to the public facility	1,000	Rehabilitation of an existing public facility specific to a geographic area
EO-1.1	Number of loans/grants	2	Loans and grants to small businesses
EO-2.1	Number of loans/grants	2	Loans and grants to small businesses
EO-3.1	Number of loans/grants	2	Loans and grants to small businesses

[5] Since HOME and CDBG grant funds are primarily distributed through competitive and/or first-come, first-serve processes, the state cannot accurately predict the number of and distribution of grant assistance among specific objectives. The specific number of households, businesses, etc., expected to be assisted each program year is based on the historic number assisted in previous years, adjusted for anticipated declines in funding and rising costs, which may or may not be an accurate reflection of future fund distributions.

Outcomes & Objectives*	Performance Indicators	Expected Number[5]	Activity Description

*Use one of 9 outcome/objective categories:			
	Availability/Accessibility	**Affordability**	**Sustainability**
Suitable Living Environment	SL-1	SL-2	SL-3
Decent Housing	DH-1	DH-2	DH-3
Economic Opportunity	EO-1	EO-2	EO-3

V. METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION

Housing and community development needs vary widely across the state. The extreme diversity in the available infrastructure and housing, age of housing stock, and overall range in population complicate the assessment of the type and degree of housing and community development needs. Because of the limited availability of resources and the extent of community development and housing needs, each of the three formula grant programs has developed its own methods to address priority needs and to distribute CDBG, ESG, and HOME Program funds to eligible entities for the activities expected to be carried out during the program year.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Program Categories

The basic categories for local community development projects are housing and neighborhood renewal, public and community facilities, economic development, and planning projects. Some of the activities that can be carried out with CDBG funds include acquiring real property; rehabilitating residential and nonresidential properties (including special facilities for persons with disabilities); constructing new, affordable housing (when sponsored by a nonprofit organization); providing public facilities and improvements such as water, wastewater or solid waste facilities, rural hospitals or senior citizen centers; and assisting for-profit businesses to promote economic development activities that will result in the creation or retention of jobs.

The Department of Commerce is developing a new competitive program that will provide strategic technical assistance, comprehensive planning, and infrastructure funding to Montana communities. The Department will assist competitively chosen communities in developing a comprehensive strategic plan that will guide the development of housing, infrastructure, public health and safety services, and economic development to encourage long-term sustainable growth. Commerce will facilitate direct consultation with other state and federal agencies and local non-profits to provide a comprehensive approach to the planning and implementation of the improvements. The CDBG planning and project funds, partnered with other state and federal agency funds, can assist communities in implementing the strategic objectives identified in the local community plan.

Housing and Neighborhood Renewal Projects

CDBG housing and neighborhood renewal projects may consist of one or more activities designed to address the affordable housing needs of low- and moderate-income households. The principle activities within a housing and neighborhood renewal project must clearly be designed to address needs appropriate to the category and be pertinent to a national or state objective of the CDBG program.

CDBG housing and neighborhood renewal program has two housing applications; noncompetitive and competitive applications to better serve all persons of low and moderate income. The noncompetitive application will allow eligible applicants to submit an individual property assistance housing application for distinct projects that propose to complete infill development activities; redevelopment or rehabilitation of individual properties in order to bring units to a safe, decent and sanitary living condition; or homebuyer support through down payment assistance. The traditional competitive housing application will continue to allow eligible applicants to submit multi-unit housing development applications for CDBG housing funds. A portion of the CDBG funds will be set-aside for the non-competitive individual property assistance activities.

Through the noncompetitive CDBG individual property assistance, eligible applicants can use CDBG housing funds to expand homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons by paying closing costs, and providing up to 50% of any down payment. Specific requirements of the noncompetitive program include, but are not limited to, documenting the housing activity is identified as a community need, funds will provide a long-term period of affordability, and the activities will provide a benefit to persons of low and moderate income as well as comply with all CDBG requirements. Grants will be awarded on an incremental basis for individual projects.

Public Facility Projects

CDBG also assists local governments build affordable community facilities that primarily benefit persons of low to moderate income. CDBG prioritizes those projects identified in a community growth policy, capital improvement plan, a strategic community development plan with assistance from the Department, as explained above, or other similar needs assessment or community planning efforts. Public facility projects may consist of one or more activities designed to resolve a community development need associated with the new construction, deferred maintenance, redevelopment or upgrade of public infrastructure, such as water or sewer services; public health or safety services, such as fire protection; or community facilities such as a youth home, food bank or senior center. Activities may also include direct assistance to persons of low to moderate income families to pay special assessments or hookup charges for public improvements, such as connection to a new public wastewater collection system. The competitive public facility application for funds must clearly show that the principal activities within a public facility project will address needs appropriate to the category and be pertinent to a national or state objective of the CDBG program.

Communities have also utilized CDBG funds to construct or rehabilitate facilities designed for use predominately by persons of low- and moderate-income such as senior citizen centers, Head Start centers, public nursing home facilities, mental health centers, and public hospitals in rural communities. These facilities typically have specific requirements and provide unique services that differentiate them from other housing projects, such as those providing homeowner rehabilitation, multi-family construction, or first-time homebuyer assistance. The clientele served by short-term residential facilities must typically meet very specific criteria and follow specific treatment programs. The community facility project activity is a public service function that includes services such as the provision of temporary housing and counseling services. Because the project focus is on the provision of a public service (as opposed to long-term, permanent housing), it is appropriate to rank these types of facilities under the public facility category.

Method of Distribution for CDBG Housing and Public Facilities Projects

MDOC will accept Housing and Public Facility project applications for FFY 2014 funds in the spring of 2014, with awards announced after MDOC has been allocated HUD funding. As stated earlier, CDBG funds will be awarded through competitive housing and public facility and noncompetitive housing applications. All competitive applications will be ranked according to the established criteria. The noncompetitive housing application will not be ranked but rather reviewed against the established application criteria to ensure compliance with CDBG program objectives and until the set aside funds are fully obligated.

Planning Projects–Public Facilities, Housing and Neighborhood Renewal

The CDBG Program is able to play a unique role in assisting Montana communities because of its ability to offer planning grants to local governments. The CDBG housing and public facilities planning grant funds are used to assist local governments in a wide variety of long-term planning-related activities including updating community growth policies; conducting community needs assessments; developing capital improvement plans; conducting housing studies; preparing downtown development and historic preservation plans; and preparing preliminary architectural or engineering plans related to public facility and housing activities. Planning grant funds may also be used to develop comprehensive strategic development plans to guide the development of housing, infrastructure, public health and safety services, and economic development in Montana communities.

Community Revitalization

The Department considers community revitalization activities as a principal CDBG planning and project grant activity. CDBG urges local government grantees to consider community revitalization activities as a complimentary activity to one of the basic eligible CDBG housing and neighborhood renewal or public facilities activities, such as doing neighborhood revitalization (demolition, clean up, park development) in conjunction with a traditional housing rehabilitation project. As stated earlier, Commerce is developing a new competitive program that will provide technical assistance, comprehensive planning, and infrastructure funding to assist Montana communities.

Economic Development Projects

Montana's CDBG Economic Development Program is designed to stimulate economic development activity by assisting the private sector in order to create or retain jobs for low- and moderate-income persons. CDBG funds are intended to be used in situations where a funding gap exists or alternative sources of public and private financing are not adequate. These funds are intended to complement conventional business financing and those of other federal programs such as the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The program also complements MDOC programs for business assistance administered by the Business Resources Division, such as the Regional Development Program and the state Micro Business Finance Program, as well as programs administered by the Montana Board of Investments.

The CDBG-ED Program assists businesses by making appropriate long-term, fixed-rate financing available to them at reasonable interest rates with flexible terms. Typical eligible activities within the CDBG economic development category may include: land acquisition; public facilities, infrastructure (water and sewer lines, sidewalks, access roads, etc.), and other improvements in support of economic development; loans for acquiring, constructing, rehabilitating, or installing commercial and industrial buildings, facilities, or for working capital; grants for job training; and grants or loans from communities to nonprofit entities.

The CDBG-ED Program provides instructions for and descriptions of criteria used to select applications for funding. The annual application guidelines provide a checklist of items that applicants must provide in their applications (see the checklist starting on page 41).

Guaranteed Loan Funds

The state does not currently anticipate aiding non-entitlement units of general local government in applying for guaranteed loan funds under 24 CFR part 570, subpart M (the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program). However, HUD Section 108 Loan Guarantees will be available under exceptional circumstances. These loans will be available subject to the analysis and discretion of the MDOC Loan Review Committee and contingent upon the local government applicant and financing package receiving assistance from an organization or individual consultant experienced with structuring Section 108 projects.

Funding

Annual CDBG Grant

For the plan year beginning April 1, 2014, MDOC will receive an estimated $5,847,967 in federal CDBG funds. Of these dollars, after program administration and technical expenses, MDOC will allocate, at the discretion of the Director, up to 40% for economic development planning and projects.

To ensure that all funds are awarded within the 15-month timeframe, the MDOC Director, at her discretion, may reallocate unexpended or non-awarded CDBG funds in between

normal grant application cycles to expedite necessary projects and the expenditure of CDBG funds consistent with the objectives of the CDBG Program.

Funds Recaptured by the State from Local Governments

MDOC will redistribute any funds recaptured by the state from local governments that received previous annual grants to other units of general local government using the same method of distribution that currently governs the programs.

Funds Reallocated to the State by HUD

MDOC will distribute any funds that HUD reallocates to the state to units of general local government using the same method of distribution that currently governs the programs and/or by any rules imposed by HUD as a condition of receiving the reallocated funds.

Program Income

The CDD and BRD anticipate that local grantees will generate an indeterminate amount of program income. Grantee communities that have an approved CDBG program income plan retain the funds for further CDBG-eligible activities. Each year, local governments receiving CDBG program income file a report showing the status of program revenues and expenditures.

Other Funding Considerations

Applicants should apply only for the level of funding necessary to carry out the project. Grant requests must be sufficient either by themselves, or in combination with other proposed funding sources, to complete the proposed activities within 24 months from the date of the announcement of grant award by MDOC. Communities applying for economic development funding can continue to apply for funding throughout the program year until they have reached the maximum amount of $400,000 per local government.

Existing grantees must significantly drawdown their current funds before they are eligible to apply for additional program funds. Each local government may apply for economic development funding up to $400,000, numerous noncompetitive housing projects according to the guidelines, one competitive housing and neighborhood renewal project, and one public facility project as established in the guidelines. While eligible applicants can apply for numerous noncompetitive housing applications, the projects will be awarded on an incremental basis and must demonstrate that the benefited unit is significantly completed or sold before additional individual properties are funded. In addition, MDOC limits each local government to an award of one CDBG-ED planning grant and one CDBG community planning, public facilities, or housing planning grant each year.

Montana's three entitlement cities, Billings, Great Falls and Missoula, are not eligible to apply for state CDBG funding since they receive their own CDBG funds directly from HUD. However, state CDBG funds can be used to fund an activity that is located within the boundaries of an entitlement community to primarily benefit non-entitlement residents. If an applicant applies for CDBG funds, the entitlement community will be expected to

provide a reasonable share of the project funds. These project activities could be a homeless shelter or senior center that is located in the boundaries of an entitlement community, but is providing a significant benefit to non-entitlement residents. This broadened use of CDBG funds will provide a more regional approach and comprehensive planning between entitlement and non-entitlement communities.

Application Selection Criteria

The CDBG Public Facilities and Housing application guidelines are available for prospective grantees to submit applications in the Spring of 2014. Non-entitlement local governments are eligible applicants. Private and nonprofit organizations are not eligible to apply directly; in these cases, a county or municipality must apply for CDBG funds on their behalf. If funded, all entities involved must execute an interlocal or sub-recipient agreement.

Housing and Neighborhood Renewal

Funds distribution for the CDBG housing and neighborhood renewal category results from an annual grant application that is both competitive and noncompetitive, based on the housing project activity. The demand for CDBG funds has typically exceeded the amount available; therefore, MDOC has developed an application ranking procedure to evaluate methodically the degree to which a proposed project responds to the objectives of Montana's CDBG Program and the ranking criteria.

MDOC evaluates competitive housing and neighborhood renewal applications according to the established guidelines, which are adopted through an administrative rule process. The CDBG application review team submits a written ranking report to the MDOC Director who makes the final decision on grant awards. Additional information on the guidelines is available on the web at **http://comdev.mt.gov/CDBG/cdbghousing.mcpx**

A professional engineer within the Division consults with the ranking team during the CDBG application review to assist in the review of preliminary architectural reports submitted by applicants for those housing projects involving the substantial rehabilitation or new construction of housing structures, (excluding the proposed rehabilitation of single-family owned residences).

MDOC will evaluate noncompetitive individual housing applications through according to guidelines that will be established for this new program and adopted through an administrative rule process.

The CDBG noncompetitive application review will present recommendations of grant funds to the MDOC Director. Once a noncompetitive application is awarded, the grantee will be awarded funds on an incremental basis to complete individual house activities. If the amount of funds set-aside for the noncompetitive housing are not awarded, the balance of available funds will be awarded through the competitive funding categories or at the discretion of the Director to projects that meet a CDBG objective.

Public Facilities

MDOC CDBG staff reviews public facility applications for completeness and for conformance to federal and state CDBG requirements. In the case of water and wastewater applications, professional engineers within the Community Development Division carefully analyze the applicant's preliminary engineering report and recommend scores for the "Need for Project" and "Project Concept and Technical Design" ranking criteria. A professional engineer within the Division provides technical assistance to staff during the review of engineering reports submitted by applicants for all types of public facility projects.

The CDBG application review team submits a ranking report to the MDOC Director who makes the final decision on grant awards. The actual number of awards is subject to funding availability and the amount of each applicant's request.

The application review team evaluates each application according to the established criteria listed in the application guidelines, which are adopted through the Administrative Rules process. The ranking team evaluates public facility applications for non-water and wastewater projects that provide less than a community-wide benefit and target a specific group of people such as Head Start and Senior Citizen Centers based strictly on "gap analysis", i.e., the documentation of the existence of a funding gap and the need for CDBG grant funds.

Additional information on grant application guidelines for public facilities is available on the web at **http://comdev.mt.gov/CDBG/cdbgpublicfacilities.mcpx**.

Planning Grants – Community Planning, Public Facilities, Housing and Neighborhood Renewal

Planning grants are awarded by the CDBG Program through a non-competitive continual application cycle. CDBG staff evaluates planning grant proposals in relation to the issues related to Community Planning, Public Facilities, and Housing and Neighborhood Renewal to ensure grant funds requested are for an eligible activity meeting the goals of the program.

The application guidelines for CDBG planning grants can be accessed on the web at **http://comdev.mt.gov/CDBG/cdbgplanninggrants.mcpx**.

Economic Development

The 2014 CDBG-ED guidelines for economic development activities, and guidelines for CDBG-ED planning grants will be available in the spring of 2014. CDBG-ED receives and awards funds to applications on a continuous cycle until all funds are committed.

Eligible applicants are local governments, which usually contract with local development organizations to loan funds to for-profit businesses that agree to create jobs for low- and moderate-income persons. CDBG staff initially reviews each application. After the initial

review is completed, a grant review committee that makes funding recommendations to the MDOC Director does a final review. The Director makes a final funding decision.

Applicants must meet certain thresholds when applying for funding, including preparing a business plan and providing a 1:1 dollar match. The CDBG-ED Program provides instructions and descriptions of criteria used to select applications for funding awards. The annual application guidelines provide a checklist of items that applicants must provide. Each point in the checklist corresponds to a chapter in the application guidelines, or appendix where local governments can utilize document templates, examples, and find detailed information for compiling their project applications. This checklist corresponds to an internal checklist used to review applications for completeness.

The CDBG-ED program has previously eliminated the minimum grant amount of $100,000 to make the program move attractive to small businesses that may need assistance but do not have a large number of employees. CDBG-ED no longer requires match in the form of new money, grants, investments, or loans, and will consider as match documented expenses incurred related to the proposal that occurred no more than 18 months prior to the date of the application. Also, the CDBG-ED program has dropped the current interest rate of 5% down to 2%.

Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis, if the thresholds and underwriting criteria are met, until all funds are committed. Application guidelines for the CDBG-ED Program are on the web at: **http://cdbged.mt.gov/applicationguidelines.mcpx**

Economic Development Planning Grants

The Business Resources Division also sets aside a portion of CDBG-ED funds for economic development planning, capacity building, and technical assistance grants. For plan year 2014, the BRD intends to use the set-aside funds for activities similar to those funded in recent years, but will establish specific application policies by Spring 2014. The policies will specify funding priorities, application procedures, and amounts available at that time for each subcategory. Funds not utilized for this category may be used for the regular CDBG-ED Program. Specific information is available on the web at **http://cdbged.mt.gov/pgapplications.mcpx**.

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

The goal of the HOME Program, administered within the Housing Division's Housing Assistance Bureau, is to expand the supply of decent, safe, affordable housing for low- and very low-income Montana households. The program achieves this goal through a range of eligible activities including down payment and closing cost assistance to homebuyers; new construction; reconstruction, relocation, and rehabilitation of property; acquisition of existing buildings, property acquisition in conjunction with new construction, reconstruction and/or rehabilitation, and other activities to develop or preserve non-luxury housing. Tenant-based rental assistance is not an eligible activity.

Housing needs vary widely across Montana. The extreme diversity in available housing, age of housing stock, and overall range in population complicate the assessment of the type and degree of housing needs. Generally, it was inferred from the household forecast and the survey conducted for the *Montana Housing Needs Assessment*[6] that most housing needs in the state were either medium or high priority. Because of the limited availability of resources and the variety of housing needs, the HOME Program leaves it up to each community, through detailed local analyses, studies and needs assessments, to determine its own highest priority housing need. The HOME Program reserves the right to make a determination of local need based on local analyses, studies and needs assessments, which may override the state's priority level listed on page 61 of our 5-year plan.

Entities eligible to access the state's HOME Program include general-purpose local governments (counties, incorporated cities and towns, and consolidated city-county governments), community housing development organizations (CHDOs) certified by MDOC, and Montana public housing authorities (PHAs). HOME entitlement cities (currently Billings, Great Falls and Missoula) receive HOME funds directly from HUD and process HOME applications for projects within their city limits. Entitlement cities and the CHDOs and PHAs operating within their boundaries are generally not eligible to access MDOC HOME funds.

The HOME Program will receive $3,017,887 in FFY 2014 funds, which will be distributed through competitive and noncompetitive processes.

Competitive Application Process

The HOME program, through a process of application and competitive ranking, will commit project funds in the third calendar quarter of 2014, with competitive applications due February 14, 2014.

The maximum request for a HOME project is $750,000 (including soft costs) for rental rehabilitation and new construction, subject to the "Fair Share Test" and "Subsidy Limit Test", as outlined in the HOME program's application guidelines. With HOME Program approval, Grantees can use program income, recaptured funds, and/or CHDO proceeds to increase the HOME grant, but not beyond the $750,000 ceiling.

Specific guidelines that relate to the HOME Program competitive application process may be obtained by contacting the HOME Program or by going to the program's website at **http://housing.mt.gov/HM/hmguidelines.mcpx**

[6] *Montana Housing Needs Assessment;* Western Economic Services; December 2009; http://housing.mt.gov/content/CP/docs/CPDocsAndRpts/CP10HNA.pdf

Noncompetitive Application Processes

For grantees interested in conducting homebuyer assistance, there is no deadline, no application, and no scoring. Instead, cities, towns, counties, and CHDOs must submit a qualification package that, at a minimum, includes:

- A management plan;
- An environmental review for every local government entity within which the qualified entity intends to operate;
- Procedures for complying with lead based paint requirements;
- A public outreach plan for the entity's entire jurisdiction;
- Evidence of public support from local governing bodies within the entity's service area; and
- Procedures to meet federal requirements related to RESPA and the SAFE Act.

HOME program staff reviews the package within 60 days of receipt. Once an entity is approved as a Qualified Entity, it enters into a contract with MDOC and begins conducting its single-family program. A recertification process is required every two years.

Additional information on the Single Family Noncompetitive Program, including information on how an entity can become qualified for the program may be obtained on the website at **http://housing.mt.gov/HM/hmsfnp.mcpx.**

Program Income and Recaptured Funds

The HOME Program expects that an undetermined amount of program income[7] and recaptured funds[8] will be generated from previously awarded grants. HOME grantees may be allowed to retain any program income and/or recaptured funds generated and use the funds for HOME-eligible activities subject to certain requirements set forth in the HOME Program guidelines. The guidelines may be obtained by contacting the HOME Program or by going to the program's website at **http://housing.mt.gov/HM/hmguidelines.mcpx.**

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM

The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) is administered by the Public Health and Human Services Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau (IHSB). ESG funds are used to meet the needs of the homeless or those at risk of homelessness at the local level. Activities include rental assistance, financial assistance of rental application fees, security and utility deposits and payments, case management, housing search and support for toll free

[7] **Program income** is the gross income received which is directly generated from the use of HOME funds, including HOME program income (24 CFR 92.2).

[8] **Recaptured funds** are HOME funds that are recouped when HOME assisted homeownership housing does not continue to be the principal residence of the assisted homebuyer for the full affordability period required by 24 CFR 92.254(a)(4). Recaptured funds represent a return of the original HOME investment.

telephone referral hotlines for domestic abuse and other homeless individuals and families; and referral to mainstream resources; assistance to shelters for the homeless and victims of domestic and sexual violence, youth homes, and food banks.

The 10 regional Human Resource Development Councils receive 87.5% of the grant funds. (See table on page 59.) The Public Health and Human Services retains 2.5% for administrative costs, and 10% supports the Homeless management Information System (HMIS) upgrade requirements.

Montana's ESG Program distributes funds to each HRDC based upon a formula allocation contained in Administrative Rules of Montana, ARM 53-10-502, pertaining to the Community Services Block Grant. The amount of funds allocated is based on poverty levels and general population in each service area, relative to the poverty and general population of the entire state. All HRDCs will submit work plans, budgets, and reports outlining which of the allowable activities will be undertaken.

VI. ALLOCATION PRIORITIES AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Montana is the fourth largest state, encompassing more than 147,000 square miles (see area comparison map Appendix C, page C-2); 607 square miles more than Maine, South Carolina, West Virginia, Maryland, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Delaware combined. Eastern Montana had been experiencing a decline in their population[9], but recently there has been a drastic change in their population and overall community needs that is directly related to the increased oil and gas production the Bakken region. The extreme diversity in the available infrastructure and housing, age of housing stock, and overall range in population complicate the assessment of the type and degree of housing and community development needs.

Developed from local input across the state, the priority needs outlined in the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan[10] address a variety of needs for affordable housing, and community and economic development. The plan represents a wide array of needs; while one community may need rental housing production at a particular site, another community may need homeowner rehabilitation over scattered sites. For the state to address its community needs, the three formula grant programs need a level of flexibility for eligible activities to be undertaken.

The limited availability of resources and the extent of community development and housing needs require each of the three formula grant programs to develop its own methods to address priority needs and geographic distribution. More importantly, the state firmly believes that it is up to each locality, through detailed local analyses, studies and needs assessments, to determine its own area(s) of highest need. The state reserves the right to make a determination of local need based on local analyses, studies, and needs

[9] *Economic and Demographic Analysis of Montana, Volume II Demographic Analysis*, Montana Department of MDOC, December 2007; http://housing.mt.gov/content/CP/docs/CPDocsAndRpts/CP08EDVol2.pdf

[10] Available at: http://housing.mt.gov/CP/cpdocuments.mcpx

assessments, which may override the state's priority level for any given activity identified in the Consolidated Plan.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The geographic distribution for each formula grant program will be different due to the diversity of each program and the federal regulations governing them. Following is a summary of each program's geographic distribution system.

Community Development Block Grant Program

Montana's local governments (towns and cities under 50,000 in population and 56 counties) are eligible applicants for CDBG funds (see map of incorporated places per county, Appendix C, page C-1). Montana's three entitlement cities, Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula (cities over 50,000 in population) are not eligible to apply for State CDBG funding since they receive their own CDBG funds directly from HUD. However, as stated earlier, state CDBG funds may be awarded to nonentitlement local governments for projects that will significantly benefit nonentitlement residents but are located within the boundaries of the entitlement community. Emphasis will be placed on assisting communities applying for housing and public facilities project and planning grants that are experiencing an increased need for housing, public facilities and infrastructure.

Housing and Neighborhood Renewal and Public Facility Categories

Fund distribution for the CDBG competitive applications for housing and neighborhood renewal and the public facility categories is based on annual grant competitions. The maximum grant request in each category is $450,000. Existing grantees must significantly drawdown their prior award(s) before they are eligible to apply for additional program funds. Each local government may apply for numerous individual noncompetitive housing units and one competitive housing and neighborhood renewal project and one public facility project and one planning grant each program year (related to either public facilities or housing) each program year.

The Community Development Division distributes the planning grant funds through a non-competitive application process. The CDBG housing and public facilities planning grant funds are used to assist local governments in a wide variety of long-term planning-related activities including preparing, updating or implementing community growth policies; conducting community needs assessments; developing capital improvement plans; conducting housing studies; preparing downtown revitalization and historic preservation plans; and the preparation of preliminary architectural or engineering plans.

Economic Development Category

The economic development component of the CDBG Program accepts applications on a continuous cycle until all funds are committed. Since the state distributes economic development funds through a first-come, first serve process throughout the year, it cannot predict the ultimate geographic distribution of the assistance.

CDBG Grant Application Deadlines

FFY 2014 CDBG Grant Application Deadlines	
Public Facilities Grants & Housing Grant Application Deadline	Spring 2014
Public Facilities, Housing & Neighborhood Renewal Grants Grant Announcement	Summer 2014
Planning Grants Public Facility and Housing	Open Cycle beginning Fall 2014
Economic Development Grants	Open Cycle
** Date tentative for announcement of awards pending approval of final FFY 2014 allocations and announcement of Montana CDBG funding levels	

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

Eligible applicants to Montana's HOME Program include general-purpose local governments (counties, incorporated cities and towns, and consolidated city-county governments), CHDOs certified by MDOC, and Montana public housing authorities.

Competitive Grants

Approximately 60% of the HOME Program's annual funding is allocated to competitive grants. During the initial grant competition, the cities of Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula, and the CHDOs and PHAs operating within their boundaries, are not eligible to apply since those cities receive a direct allocation of HOME funds from HUD. If a substantial amount of funds is not awarded during the first application round due to insufficient applications meeting the minimum funding threshold, at the discretion of MDOC, the remaining funds will be awarded through an open application cycle. Applications for this open cycle will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis until all 2014 HOME funds and any prior year carryover funds are committed. The open application cycle is open to all local governments (including Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula), and all CHDOs and PHAs within the state, including those operating within the city limit of Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula. The current application guidelines apply.

Competitive grant applications for FFY 2014 funds are due on February 14, 2014, with funding announcements expected approximately two to three months later; therefore, the state cannot predict the ultimate geographic distribution of the 2014 grant funds.

Noncompetitive Grants

The remainder of HOME Program's annual funding is allocated noncompetitively through the Single Family Noncompetitive Program (SFNP). The SFNP is an allocation of HOME funds for homebuyer assistance activities throughout the state. Qualified Entities are required to complete a Single Family Noncompetitive Program qualification package to access the SFNP allocation. An approved management plan, a component of the

qualification package, will allow the entity to enter into a contract with MDOC to assist homebuyers or homeowners within a geographical area. A minimum and maximum dollar amount will be stipulated in the contract, subject to the availability of funds in the SFNP pool. The current year's allocation for the noncompetitive program will be committed once the contract is executed. The maximum contracted dollar amount will be established by historical data specific to the entity or geographical historical data. If relevant historical data is not available, the minimum of $100,000 will be established in the contract with the ability to amend the contract to increase the dollars based on a demonstrated need, subject to the availability of funds in the SFNP pool. At the end of the contract any funds not expended or committed to a qualified homebuyer or homeowner will revert back to the competitive pool of funds. The Qualified Entity will operate according to the approved management plan and the executed contract to provide homebuyer assistance.

Emergency Solutions Grant Program

The ESG funds received will be allocated to the 10 regional Human Resource Development Councils in Montana (see the following table and the map in Appendix C) Funds are distributed based on a formula allocation, reflecting areas of poverty and general population, contained in Administrative Rules of Montana, ARM 53-10-502, pertaining to the Community Services Block Grant.

ESTIMATED Geographic Distribution - ESG Program

HRDC District	Allocation		Counties Served
	%	$	
DIST I, II, III (AEM)	7.91%	$35,005	Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley, Wibaux
DIST IV	3.09%	$13,660	Blaine, Hill, Liberty
DIST V (Opp., Inc.)	12.46%	$55,106	Cascade, Chouteau, Glacier, Pondera, Teton, Toole
DIST VI	2.19%	$ 9,709	Fergus, Golden Valley, Judith Basin, Musselshell, Petroleum, Wheatland
DIST VII	16.93%	$ 74,862	Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Yellowstone
DIST VIII (RMDC)	6.88%	$ 30,406	Broadwater, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark
DIST IX	10.41%	$ 46,043	Gallatin, Meagher, Park
DIST X (CAP)	15.74%	$ 69,597	Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Sanders
DIST XI	16.72%	$73,955	Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli
DIST XII	7.67%	$33,911	Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Granite, Madison, Powell, Silver Bow
Total	**100.00%**	**$442,254**	

ANNUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS

STATE TABLE 3B

ANNUAL HOUSING COMPLETION GOALS

	Annual Number Expected Units To Be Completed	Resources used during the period		
		CDBG	HOME	ESG
ANNUAL AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING GOALS (SEC. 315)				
Acquisition of existing units	0	☒	☒	
Production of new units	30	☒	☒	
Rehabilitation of existing units	60	☒	☒	☐
Rental Assistance	100	☐	☐	
Total Sec. 215 Affordable Rental	**190**	☒	☒	☐
ANNUAL AFFORDABLE OWNER HOUSING GOALS (SEC. 315)				
Acquisition of existing units		☐	☐	
Production of new units		☐	☐	
Rehabilitation of existing units	40	☒	☒	
Homebuyer Assistance	80	☒	☒	
Total Sec. 215 Affordable Owner	**120**	☒	☒	☐
ANNUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS (SEC. 315)				
Acquisition of existing units	0	☒	☒	
Production of new units	30	☒	☒	
Rehabilitation of existing units	100	☒	☒	☐
Homebuyer/Rental Assistance	180	☒	☒	
Total Sec. 215 Affordable Housing	**310**	☒	☒	☐
ANNUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS (SEC. 315)				
Homeless households	7,000	☐	☐	☒
Non-homeless households	80	☒	☒	☒
Special needs households	275	☒	☒	☒
ANNUAL HOUSING GOALS				
Annual Rental Housing Goal	190	☒	☒	☐
Annual Owner Housing Goal	120	☒	☒	☐
TOTAL ANNUAL HOUSING GOAL	**310**	☒	☒	☐

The state cannot accurately predict the number of homeless, non-homeless, and special needs households that will be provided housing using the funds made available to the state; nor can the state predict the number of households to be provided affordable housing through activities that provide rental assistance, produce new units, rehabilitate existing units, or acquire existing units using the funds made available to the state. As previously stated, Montana is a vast state and housing and community development needs vary widely across the state. The extreme diversity in the available infrastructure and housing, age of housing stock, and overall range in population complicate the assessment of the type and degree of housing and community development needs. The state firmly believes that it is up to each locality, through detailed local analyses, studies and needs assessments, to determine its own area(s) of highest need.

Furthermore, the application for HOME and CDBG grant housing funds is done largely on a competitive basis or a first-come, first-serve basis. The state cannot predict the number of applications it will receive, what activities will be funded, or how many or what types of households will be served. The state cannot accurately predict the number of, and distribution of, grant assistance among specific goals.

For the purposes of completing Table 3B, the specific number of households, units, etc., expected to be assisted each program year is based on the historic number completed in previous years, which may or may not be an accurate reflection of future completions.

VII. HOMELESS AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS

HOMELESSNESS

Montana Continuum of Care

The MT CoC's mission is to maximize the resources focused on overcoming homelessness, to collectively direct the most efficient use of limited resources, and to promote a coordinated system of outreach, referral, information sharing, planning, and service. MT CoC participants are responsible for leveraging each other's resources and for providing increased and coordinated services to homeless across the state.

Participation in the statewide coalition is open to anyone interested and new members are continually encouraged and recruited. Participants include representatives from local and state government, public housing authorities, regional HRDCs, and other nonprofit organizations representing the homeless, housing and service providers, emergency shelters, domestic abuse shelters, veterans' organizations, and mental health centers.

The MT CoC prioritizes and ranks homeless projects each year and prepares a consolidated, statewide continuum of care application in response to the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Projects originate from local community continuums of care or a state agency. Project approvals are based upon performance and capacity criteria as well as local needs and HUD priorities.

To meet the opportunities and challenges of the new HEARTH Act, the MT CoC underwent significant structural, policy and procedural changes in 2012. In addition to continuing to fulfill historic roles, the HEARTH Act requires CoCs to assume greater responsibilities in planning and implementing efforts that will eradicate homelessness, including:

- Coordinate and prepare a statewide CoC grant application package (currently brings over $2.5 million to state homeless projects)
- Conduct an annual statewide homeless survey and housing inventory
- Ongoing implementation and expansion of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Develop a 10 Year Plan for ending Chronic Homelessness and homelessness overall.
- Increase participation in annual update of the state Consolidated Plan
- Inventory all state discharge policies and practices, incorporate key agency personnel in CoC planning activities and promote adoption of best practices

- Expand the scope of homelessness to reflect a new definition that includes imminently homeless as well as persons living in overcrowded conditions or substandard housing
- Develop new and collaborative strategies that address prevention and rapid re-housing, especially for families, through incorporation of the new Emergency Solutions Grant and transition planning for the ARRA era Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program
- Continue to create permanent supportive housing for individuals with disabilities, especially the chronically homeless which will now include families
- Re-organize and expand the organizational capacity of the MT CoC to meet the increasing responsibilities of CoC Collaborative Applicants and Unified Funding Agencies
- Implement systems and practices rooted in performance based outcomes, including reliable data systems and effective monitoring and assessment activities.

The MT CoC Coalition adopted a 10 Year Strategic Plan in 2013 with the following goals:

1. Decrease Individual Chronic Homeless to near 0 by 2016
2. Decrease “Most in Need” Family Homeless to 0 by by 2017
3. Decrease “Most in Need” Individual Homeless to 0 by 2019
4. Decrease all homeless to near 0 by 2023

Strategies to achieve the goals in both family and individual homelessness are:

<u>Family Strategies:</u>

1. Reallocate CoC funded Transitional Housing Beds (current inventory of 255) to Rapid Re-housing or Permanent Supportive Housing
2. Prioritize current Emergency Solutions Grant to Rapid Re-housing for families
3. Dedicate or prioritize use of TANF funds for Rapid Re-housing of TANF eligible families
4. Prioritize Section 8 Vouchers for PSH Graduates
5. Increase availability of PSH beds by shortening lengths of stay
6. Creating state-funded vouchers

<u>Individual Strategies:</u>

1. Reallocate CoC funded Transitional Housing Beds (current inventory of 255) to Rapid Re-housing or Permanent Supportive Housing

2. Dedicate PSH turnover beds for CH (200 non-CH beds available)
3. Increase availability of PSH beds by shortening lengths of stay
4. Increase availability of PSH beds by prioritizing Section 8 Vouchers for PSH Graduates
5. Creating state-funded vouchers
6. Prioritize current Emergency Solutions Grant to Rapid Re-housing for individuals

2013 Continuum of Care: Homeless Population and Subpopulations Chart
Point in Time Summary for MT – 500 – Montana Statewide CoC
Date of PIT Count 1/24/2013
Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Persons in Households with at least one Adult and one Child					
	Sheltered				
	Emergency	Transitional		Unsheltered	Total
Number of Households	89	76		42	**207**
Number of persons (Adults & Children)	296	224		147	**667**

Persons in Households without Children					
	Sheltered				
	Emergency	Transitional		Unsheltered	Total
Number of Households	367	156		574	**1097**
Number of Persons (Adults)	410	160		635	**1205**

Persons in Households with only Children					
	Sheltered				
	Emergency	Transitional		Unsheltered	Total
Number of Households	0	2		2	**4**
Number of Persons (Age 17 or under)	0	4		2	**6**

Total Households and Persons					
	Sheltered				
	Emergency	Transitional		Unsheltered	Total
Total Households	456	234		618	**1308**
Total Persons	706	388		784	**1878**

Chronically Homeless Subpopulations				
	Sheltered			
	Chronically homeless persons in emergency	Chronically homeless persons in safe havens	Unsheltered	Total
Chronically Homeless Individuals	55	0	156	**210**
Chronically Homeless Families	4	0	3	**7**

Homeless Subpopulations			
	Sheltered		

	Persons in emergency shelters, transitional housing and safe havens	Unsheltered	Total
Veterans	118	191	**309**
Severely Mentally Ill	177	102	**279**
Chronic Substance Abuse	87	76	**163**
Persons with HIV/AIDS	1	3	**4**
Victims of Domestic Violence	107	16	**123**

Discharge Coordination Policy

One of the concrete mechanisms that has been consistently employed since 2005 has been the delivery of SOAR (SSI/SSDI[11] Outreach, Access and Recovery) classes to case managers and transition planners. Initially, three participated in the training. One more state-level trainer has been added in the interim. These classes are designed to give case managers and others providing direct and transition services to persons with SDMI and who are homeless or at high risk of homelessness the tools they need to write SSI/SSDI applications that are approved at the earliest possible juncture. At least one class a year is arranged for corrections professionals, including community corrections, probation/parole, and prison transition planners. At least four other classes each year are offered throughout Montana; up to 30 people attend each class. These tools have been helpful in terms of getting people on SSI, which is automatically coupled with Medicaid. This tool is often enough to help keep people in stable housing and to ensure that they can access healthcare. It has the added benefit of helping individuals with SDMI to begin building a social network that can help maintain stability.

This partnership continues, and in the past year, the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division (AMDD) of the Department of Public Health and Human Services has begun providing staff to serve as the SOAR State Team Lead. They have also begun making a concerted effort to send staff from the publicly funded mental health facilities to SOAR Train-the-Trainer events, with the intent of ensuring that each site has at least one SOAR trainer on staff. They have also begun implementing evaluation strategies to ensure that the SOAR methods are working and that appropriate candidates are approved for SSI/SSDI benefits at the earliest possible juncture. This is a win-win for the AMDD: once SSI is approved, the individual is concurrently eligible for Medicaid, which provides a payment source for services provided.

Several innovative and successful tools are in place in Montana. The state's first Behavioral Health Program Facilitator was hired as a liaison between the departments of Corrections and Public Health and Human Services. Some of the other mechanisms put in place were discussed in the *Prevention Connection Newsletter*[12], a publication funded through the state's Chemical Dependency Block Grant and published by the Prevention Resource Center. An article by the Behavioral Health Program Facilitator speaks to some

[11] Supplemental Security Income / Social Security Disability Insurance

[12] **http://www.prevention.mt.gov/resource/prevconn/pcarchives.asp**

of the efforts that ultimately will help keep persons who are mentally ill and reentering the community after prison sentences from becoming homeless.[13]

Additional mechanisms that may result in reduced homelessness due to addiction and co-occurring disorders include the state's residential treatment facilities for low-income citizens. Boyd Andrew Community Services was awarded a contract with the Public Health and Human Services in 2008 to administer and manage a multi-level residential treatment system, the Residential Treatment Expansion Consortium (RTEC). Among other things, RTEC provides a long overdue opportunity to bridge the treatment gap between Public Health and Human Services and the Montana Department of Corrections (MCOR) by providing a continuum of care for chemically dependent clients served by both departments.

The consortium providing this system consists of six separate “state approved” chemical dependency treatment programs working together under a unified administration. The treatment system represents state of the art in treatment technology and theory by providing treatment programming that combines nationally recognized American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) diagnostic criteria and Therapeutic Community Milieu with a variety of cognitive behavioral therapies that are gender and culturally specific.

RTEC offers inpatient treatment beds for men and women, detox/crisis stabilization services for both men and women who are referred into the RTEC system, and 5 recovery houses located throughout Montana. RTEC is committed to providing long term care to individuals with methamphetamine and other substance disorders. RTEC is able to offer a seamless continuum of care from detox/crisis stabilization services to inpatient treatment followed by recovery based support homes.

The seven consortium participating programs are:

- The Elkhorn Treatment Center operated by Boyd Andrew Community Services in Boulder, MT provides four inpatient treatment beds for women. The average length of stay is 9 months.
- The Rimrock Foundation of Billings provides six inpatient treatment beds for men and two inpatient treatment beds for women. The average length of stay is approximately 45 days at a ASAM Level 3.5.
- The Blue Thunder Lodge operated by Gateway Recovery in Great Falls provides a cultural specific recovery based support home for Native American men. Length of stay is 9 months.
- The White Sky Hope Lodge operated by the White Sky Hope Center located on the Rocky Boy Reservation in Box Elder provides a cultural specific recovery based support home for Native American women. The length of stay is 9 months.

[13] Matteucci, Deb, “A Partnership for Change,” The Prevention Connection Newsletter, p. 21, Montana Prevention Resource Center, http://prevention.mt.gov/resource/prevconn/files/2008/Winter_2008.pdf

- The Olive Branch Home operated by Alcohol and Drug Services of Gallatin County in Bozeman provides a recovery based support home for men only. Length of stay is 9 months.
- The Lighthouse Recovery Home operated by Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center in Miles City provides a recovery based support home for men only. The length of stay is 9 months.
- The Kalispell Women's Recovery Home operated by Flathead Valley Chemical Dependency Center in Kalispell provides a recovery based support home for women only. Length of stay is 9 months.

Youth: It is also very difficult to find housing for youth coming out of foster care. According to the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections[14], as of September 30, 2009, 1,583 children were in the Montana foster care system. Most are placed in response to parental abuse or neglect, on average, the children who were in foster care on September 30, 2009 had been in care for 26.5 months. Approximately 12 percent (190 youth) were between 16 and 18 years of age, making them strong candidates for aging out of foster care. This is consistent with a Winter 2007 *Prevention Connection* article[15], which stated that approximately 1,700 Montana children are in foster care at any given time and that about 100 will age out each year. They will be at high risk of becoming homeless because they lack familial, economic and social resources, have limited education and employment experience, and receive relatively poor mental and physical health services.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 was created to assist with transition from foster care to independence. Its purpose was to provide states with flexible funding for financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other supports and services targeted to former foster care recipients between the ages of 18 and 21. Children who are 16 or older and in foster care must have an independent living plan. Generally, children who are in foster care at this age are in planned permanent living arrangements. Independent living services are important in assuring these youth successfully transition to adulthood. While previously contracted out, services are currently provided "in house" by Division staff within each region[16]. The Child and Family Services Plan states as a goal, "Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and making the transition into adulthood." Some of the strategies noted under this goal include

[14] National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections at the Hunger College School of Social Work (a service of the Children's Bureau ACF/DHHS): http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/state/Montana.pdf.

[15] Foster Youth and Homelessness. Heather Winter. Winter 2007 Prevention Connection. P. 6. http://prevention.mt.gov/resource/prevconn/files/2007/prevconn_2007_winter.pdf

[16] Harter, Elizabeth. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Child and Family Services Division: Child and Family Services Plan 2010 - 2014. June 30, 2009. http:// http://prevention.mt.gov/resource/prevconn/files/2007/prevconn_2007_winter.pdf

promoting the development of low-cost housing and assisting youth in applying for Section 8 or other low-income housing. While these are laudable strategies, there is no housing available to meet the needs of youth who age out of foster care without a permanent, legal family. Youth have not had the opportunity to build credit or rental histories. Without children of their own or significant disabilities, there are few public resources they can access. Research shows that many will face significant obstacles including homelessness, depression, unemployment and engagement in teen risk behaviors including substance abuse. Eligible youth *can* access financial assistance with deposits, set up fees and up to three months of Chafee funds for room and board once they age out, but because of their many obstacles and without consistent, ongoing support it is difficult for youth to sustain housing once the subsidy runs out. The Chafee Program in Montana (the Montana Foster Care Independence Program), receives approximately $500,000[17] in an annual federal allotment for use statewide. About 10– 15 percent of these funds are used for housing assistance.

SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS

Special needs housing, or supportive housing, is housing that provides supportive services and/or physical adaptations, allowing residents with special needs to live independently in integrated community settings. Persons with special needs may have a variety of mental and physical disabilities and, therefore, need a variety of housing options that varies depending on the type of disability and may vary throughout an individual's life depending on the degree of disability and individual circumstances.

Special needs populations also include persons with chemical addictions and victims of domestic violence, which share a need for supportive services in order to achieve a stable living environment and reintegrate into society. Because of their need for the combination of affordable housing linked to targeted services, they are included in the groups that benefit from supportive housing.

Elderly and Frail Elderly

Objectives and Actions / Resources:

- **Provide Housing Options for the Elderly**
  - Support efforts by the Public Health and Human Services Senior and Long Term Care Division (SLTCD) to continue to develop a growing continuum of long-term care services, ranging from institutional care (nursing homes and assisted living facilities) to home and community based services (personal care, home health services, hospice, homemaker, home chore, congregate and home delivered meals programs, transportation, health promotion programs, etc.)

[17] Fiscal Year 2010 Allotments for States and Tribes: Chafee Foster Care Independence Program http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2010/pi1008a3.pdf

- Continue to market and support the Reverse Annuity Mortgage Loan Program, which enables Montana low-income homeowners over 68 years old to provide for their own in-home support by utilizing cash from a Reverse Annuity Mortgage
- Continue to make funds available through the MBOH Disabled Accessible Affordable Home Ownership Program to provide architecturally accessible homes for persons with permanent disabilities and mobility impairments
- Continue to offer education regarding universal design and accessibility requirements in order to increase the number of accessible multi- and single-family units available to the elderly population
- For the LIHTC, HOME, and CDBG Housing programs, require the following universal accessibility features for all new construction and major rehabilitation that replaces interior walls and doors; in housing projects, and encourage such features in all major rehabilitation projects:
  - 36 inch doors for all living areas (except pantry, storage, and closets)
  - levered handles for exterior and interior doors (except exterior swing doors)
  - outlets mounted not less than 15 inches above floor covering
  - light switches, control boxes and/or thermostats mounted no more than 48 inches above floor covering
  - walls adjacent to toilets, bath tubs and shower stalls require reinforcement for later installation of grab bars
  - lever style faucets for laundry hook-up, lavatory and kitchen sink
  - Ground floor units with “no step” entry

Persons with Disabilities

Objectives and Actions / Resources:

- **Provide Housing Options for Persons with Disabilities**
  - Continue to utilize MDOC and MBOH funds to develop projects targeted to persons with physical, developmental, and mental disabilities
  - Increase group living and homeownership opportunities for persons with severe and disabling mental illness and other disabilities through cooperation with organizations such as the Montana Home Choice Coalition
  - Continue to make funds available through the MBOH Disabled Accessible Affordable Home Ownership Program to provide architecturally accessible homes for persons with permanent mobility impairments
  - Continue to offer education regarding universal design and accessibility requirements in order to increase the number of accessible multi- and single-family units available to persons with disabilities
  - For LIHTC, HOME, and CDBG, require the following universal accessibility features for all new construction and major rehabilitation that replaces interior

walls and doors; in housing projects, and encourage such features in all major rehabilitation projects:

- 36 inch doors for all living areas (except pantry, storage, and closets)
- levered handles for exterior and interior doors (except exterior swing doors)
- outlets mounted not less than 15 inches above floor covering
- light switches, control boxes and/or thermostats mounted no more than 48 inches above floor covering
- walls adjacent to toilets, bath tubs and shower stalls require reinforcement for later installation of grab bars
- lever style faucets for laundry hook-up, lavatory and kitchen sink
- no-step entry to all ground floor units

- Continue to seek HOPWA funding for the Tri-State HELP and Tri-State HELP Plus housing assistance programs for people living with HIV/AIDS

Victims of Domestic Violence

Objectives and Actions / Resources:

- **Provide Housing Options for Victims of Domestic Violence**
  - Continue to make funding available through normal processes.

Veterans

Objectives and Actions / Resources:

- **Provide Housing Options for Veterans**
  - Continue to assist veterans through the HUD–VASH program, which combines HUD HCV rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Veterans Affairs at its medical centers and in the community.
    - Lend support to the federal goal in the HEARTH Act to ensure that individuals and families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 30 days.
  - Continue to administer first-time homebuyer financing from the MBOH under the terms of the Service Member's Civil Relief Act, which prohibits foreclosure during a time of active duty and forgives interest debts on delinquent loans in excess of 6%.

MINORITY POPULATIONS

Native American Population

With the Blackfeet Reservation covering much of it, Glacier County has the largest concentration of Native Americans in the state with more than 61.4% of its population being American Indian. Big Horn County is a close second with a 60.6% American Indian population. Both the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations are located in this county. The third highest concentration is in Roosevelt County where the Fort Peck Reservation is located.[18]

Objectives and Actions / Resources:

Applications for the CDBG and HOME Programs are received from all areas of the state, including areas of concentrated minority populations such as towns located within reservation boundaries, county-sponsored water and sewer districts, and counties that include designated reservation land.

The HOME Program accepts applications from CHDOs around the state. Some certified CHDOs in Montana have reservation land within their service areas and are encouraged to apply for HOME funds for projects in those areas.

House Bill 608: The 2003 Montana Legislature passed House Bill 608 (HB 608), an act relating to the government-to-government relationship between the Montana Indian Tribes and the state of Montana. HB 608 provides for tribal consultation in the development of state agency policies that directly affect Indian tribes, authorizes certain state employees to receive annual training, provides for annual meetings between state and tribal officials, and requires that an annual report of the actions be produced by state agencies.

When formulating or implementing policies or administrative rules that have direct tribal implications, state agencies are directed to consider the following principles:

- a commitment to cooperation and collaboration
- mutual understanding and respect
- regular and early communication
- a process of accountability for addressing issues
- preservation of the tribal-state relationship.

At least once a year, state agency managers and key employees who have regular communication with tribes will receive training on the legal status of tribes, the legal rights of tribal members, and social, economic, and cultural issues of concern to tribes. This training is to be provided by the Montana Department of Justice and a trainer selected by

[18] *Economic and Demographic Analysis of Montana, Volume II Demographic Analysis*, Montana Department of MDOC, December 2007; **http://housing.mt.gov/CP/economicdemographicanalysis.mcpx**

the tribal governments. In addition, each year the Governor, along with state agency representatives and tribal officials may review the policies that directly affect tribal governments and tribal populations, and recommend changes and/or formulate solutions to the policies.

State agencies are directed to submit a report each year to the Governor and to each tribal government on the activities of the state agency relating to tribal government and tribal populations. The report must include:

- any policy that the state agency adopted that directly impact the tribes
- the name of the individual within the state agency who is responsible for implementing the policy
- the process that the state agency has established to identify the programs of the state agency that affect tribes
- the efforts of the state agency to promote communication and the government-to-government relationship between the state agency and the tribes
- the efforts of the state agency to ensure tribal consultation and the use of American Indian data in the development and implementation of agency programs that directly affect tribes
- a joint description by tribal program staff and state staff of the required training.

Efforts to Further Native American Housing Opportunities

Section 184 Indian Housing Program: The Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program is a relatively new and innovative housing program to enable Native American families and Indian Housing Authorities (IHAs) to gain access to sources of private financing. A Native American is an eligible borrower if he/she will occupy the property as his/her principal home and has met certain credit and underwriting standards. An IHA is an eligible applicant as well. IHAs may borrow funds for the development of single family homes that may be subsequently sold to eligible borrowers. To apply, they can visit any approved lender (financial institution) and apply for a mortgage loan.

Since July of 1995, MBOH has set aside more than $8,000,000 in recycled mortgage funds to provide the permanent financing for qualifying lower income individuals to purchase single family homes located on trust land on an Indian Reservation or on fee simple land off-reservations that are guaranteed by HUD through Section 184 for Native Americans. MBOH worked with local banks, tribal representatives, bond counsel, state and regional HUD officials to get special consideration and guarantees from the Secretary of HUD in Washington D.C. to enable MBOH to participate in this program initially. MBOH created a special set-aside for native Americans that allows for higher income limits for extended households.

Before the 184 Loan Guarantee Program could be utilized in Montana, each Tribe needed to adopt foreclosure and eviction procedures. Nearly all of Montana's tribes have adopted the procedures. As a member of the Montana American Indian Housing Task Force, MBOH was instrumental in getting the reservations qualified for the HUD 184 home

mortgage guarantee program.The Crow Tribe subsequently filed the necessary forms and obtained approval for the balance of the state, allowing HUD 184 loan guarantees to be used off reservations as well.

Montana House™: MBOH is working in partnership with local vocational training programs to construct the Montana House™. See page 16 for additional information on the Montana House™.

NeighborWorks Montana: The NWMT extends down payment and closing cost assistance to the Rocky Boy's, Flathead, and Fort Peck Reservations. Services offered to potential homebuyers on the reservation and statewide include credit counseling, homebuyer training, and foreclosure prevention. NWMT provides second mortgages statewide (not just to the reservations) for down payment and closing cost assistance with funding received from Neighborhood Reinvestment.

MBOH Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. The LIHTC programhas funded affordable multifamily housing properties submitted by tribes in Montana including the Salish and Kootenai, the Blackfeet, Fort Belknap Housing Authority, Northern Cheyenne Housing Authority, and Fort Peck Housing Authority.

Tax credits and Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) funds have been shown to work well together and projects submitted by the tribes continue to score well as the Indian lands in Montana show a great need for safe, decent, affordable housing.

VIII. OTHER ACTIONS
HOUSING

Homeownership

- Provide Homeownership opportunities to low- and moderate-income households throughout Montana
  - Continue to make funds available for homebuyer programs throughout the state through the HOME program's Single Family Noncompetitive Program for down payment and closing cost assistance and through the competitive program for single family development projects
  - Continue to make funds available for homebuyer programs throughout the state through CDBG Program for noncompetitive down payment and closing cost assistance.
  - Continue to make bond funds available to assist low- to moderate-income homebuyers each year with low interest rate loans; MBOH expects to assist 500-800 borrowers this year
  - Continue to operate the Mortgage Credit Certificate program, which began operation in April 2003; MBOH expects to assist 60 borrowers this year

- Continue to make funds available through the Single Family Recycled Mortgage Program to lower income persons and families who do not have the financial capabilities to purchase safe and sanitary housing through other single family programs; MBOH expects to assist 100-200 borrowers this year
- Continue to support the Section 8 Homeownership Voucher program; since the inception of the program, awareness of the program has brought together various partners, leading the success of homebuyers statewide.
- Continue support of private foundations committed to leveraging federal dollars for affordable housing throughout the state
- Continue to support Montana House™ program, a collaboration between MBOH, Blackfeet Housing Authority, and Blackfeet Manpower. MBOH provides the building materials for the homes and students build the homes as part of a vocational training curriculum; MBOH expects 2-4 homes will be completed this year.

➢ <u>Mitigate effects of delinquency and foreclosures</u>

- Continue to seek grant funding for MBOH housing and foreclosure counseling programs
- Contingent upon funding, continue to provide foreclosure counseling to 1200 homeowners this year
- Contingent upon funding, continue to provide homebuyer counseling to 200 homebuyers this year and first-time homebuyer classes to 1,200 participants
- Continue to require homebuyer education classes for all homebuyers assisted with HOME funds as a condition of receiving the funds
- Continue to explore creative means to deliver homebuyer training in rural areas
- Increase awareness of predatory lending practices by participating in the Montana Financial Education Coalition

➢ <u>Mitigate effects of high energy costs and building costs</u>

- HOME and CDBG programs will continue to require projects to conform to federal and state energy efficiency standards.
- Continue to leverage HOME and CDBG funds with weatherization programs administered throughout the state
- Continue to promote housing that is modified or constructed to meet federal and state energy efficiency standards
- Continue to encourage green building techniques

➢ <u>Mitigate the effects of environmental hazards</u>

- Present information on the LBP regulations and lead-safe work practices at its application and grant administration workshops

- Provide information on methamphetamine contamination at workshops and conferences

Rental Housing

- Improve the Quality and Availability of Affordable Rental Housing for Low- and Moderate-Income Households
  - Utilize MDOC and MBOH resources funds to rehabilitate existing and construct new rental housing
  - Utilize MDOC and MBOH resources to preserve rental units subject to expiring HUD or 515 Rural Development contracts to ensure these units continue to remain viable, affordable units
  - Continue to support the Section 8 housing choice voucher program, which provides essential rental subsidy to very low and low-income Montanans
  - Continue to offer permanent mortgage financing for affordable rental housing in partnership with HUD's Risk Sharing Program, which provides mortgage loan insurance
  - Continue to offer permanent mortgage financing through its General Obligation Program, which issues tax-exempt bonds to finance projects that do not have mortgage insurance

- Mitigate effects of high energy costs and building costs
  - HOME and CDBG programs will continue to require projects to conform to federal and state energy efficiency standards.
  - Continue to leverage HOME and CDBG funds with weatherization programs administered throughout the state
  - Continue to promote housing that is modified or constructed to meet federal and state energy efficiency standards
  - Continue to encourage green building techniques

- Mitigate the effects of environmental hazards
  - Present information on the LBP regulations and lead-safe work practices at its application and grant administration workshops
  - Provide information on methamphetamine contamination at workshops and conferences

Manufactured Housing

- Explore ways to preserve manufactured housing as an affordable housing alternative for home ownership and rental
  - Continue to support mortgage financing and other financial assistance to manufactured housing placed on permanent foundations on land owned by the homeowner or leased under a long-term lease.
  - MBOH will continue to purchase first mortgage loans on manufactured housing that is on a permanent foundation, is post-1976, has been de-titled, and has mortgage insurance from FHA, VA, or RD.
  - Partner with Montana State University-Bozeman Extension Service to find solutions to decommissioning and disposal of older units.
  - Provide support to NWMT's (NeighborWorks Montana) work with ROC (resident-owned communities) issues and access to ROC USA funding.
  - Explore developing a permanent source of funding, similar to the Manufactured Home Replacement pilot program, which has the flexibility to address manufactured housing financing and decommissioning needs.

FOSTERING AND MAINTAINING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Faced with the overwhelming demand for affordable housing, the state will implement programs and deliver resources to in-need populations around Montana in an attempt to continually foster and maintain affordable housing. No single objective has the same priority in all of Montana's communities. Likewise, no single action can meet the specific housing needs and objectives of any given community. Nevertheless, MDOC is committed to moving forward with the following housing objectives and actions designed to meet those objectives.

Homeownership will be facing several challenges in the coming year. While Montana's level of foreclosures from subprime lending is relatively low, the economic downturn in the state's economy is increasing the frequency of foreclosures, especially in Flathead, Gallatin, and Ravalli counties, on many of the Tribal Reservations, and in the three Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), Missoula, Great Falls, and Billings. MBOH supports a network of foreclosure counselors through its own funds, HUD Homeownership Counseling and National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program funds. These counselors are available at no charge to assist any homebuyer who is facing foreclosure or anticipating difficulty in making their mortgage payments.

The second challenge is the tightening of credit and credit standards to support first-time homebuyers. MBOH supports a network of certified homebuyer education and counseling providers across the state to assist first-time homebuyers with information and counseling about what is needed to qualify for a home loan, and what is involved in locating and financing a home. Home purchase costs have stabilized and even declined slightly in a few areas of the state. While lower mortgage interest rates and lower house prices make this a good time to purchase a home, these lower rates are not sufficient to fill the affordability

gap in many areas of the state. With tighter credit and down payment requirements, it is likely that fewer people will be purchasing homes than in the past. Additionally, ongoing affordability gaps and higher down payment requirements will likely increase the amount of assistance needed by each household; thereby lowering the total number of homebuyers receiving down payment assistance and buying homes.

Another challenge is regulatory changes. For example, implementation of changes in RESPA disclosure requirements could discourage some lenders from making home mortgage loans because of the complexity of new requirements.

Coordination with Low Income Housing Tax Credits

MDOC houses and administers the LIHTC Program, the HOME Program, and the housing portion of the CDBG Program. The programs work well together and often jointly fund housing projects around the state. The programs developed the Uniform Application for Montana Housing Loan, Grant & Tax Credit Programs, which contains the common forms and checklists the applicant must submit when seeking financial assistance from any of the funding programs. The use of common forms and checklists reduces the time, effort, and expense incurred when applying to multiple agencies for financial assistance. In addition, the programs participate in various workshops; including the Montana Tribal Housing Authority Coalition, meetings, and providing insights, input, and recommendations on how the programs can better work together and reduce the administrative burden on applicants.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Regulatory barriers[19] do not have a significant impact on housing costs in Montana. On the contrary, the lack of regulation available to, or implemented by, Montana cities and counties can have an impact on affordable housing opportunities throughout the state. Municipalities throughout the state have adopted zoning to guide appropriate land use within city limits; while fewer counties have adopted comprehensive zoning, more local governments have come to recognize the benefit limited regulations can have in their communities. Zoning provides clarity and certainty of use to homeowners, potential homebuyers and developers, and has a hand in protecting land values for all residents. It also ensures basic health, safety and welfare needs are met for the population served. Under state statute, zoning cannot be implemented without first adopting a Growth Policy. A Growth Policy allows communities to develop a vision for their respective area and identify and prioritize needs for future growth and development. A Growth Policy focuses on many aspects of community planning, but housing needs, population changes, local services and economic conditions are key. Growth Policies funded through CDBG planning grants require the local government specifically consider the needs of low and moderate income individuals with respect to housing and public services. As Growth Policies serve as the foundation for zoning and other regulatory measures statewide, this

[19] As indicated in *"Why Not In Our Community? Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing"*, the 2005 Update to the Report of the Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing, US Department of Housing & Urban Development, Office of Policy Development & Research.

focus provides cities and counties an opportunity to clearly identify and better serve the LMI community through affordable housing and economic opportunities, and the regulatory measures that support them. .

With respect to building code, local governments are enabled by statute to adopt and enforce the uniform building codes adopted by the state (which typically follow national or international codes[20] adopted by reference) through the state's local certification program housed at the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Three counties in Montana have been certified by the state to adopt and enforce the state building codes. Montana state law requires all local governments to adopt subdivision regulations. (Section 76-3-501 MCA). While these regulations ensure impacts related to development are mitigated and do not pose a threat to public health, safety or welfare, the regulations themselves do not restrict the development of affordable housing.

ADDRESSING LEAD-BASED PAINT HAZARDS

The HUD lead-based paint (LBP) regulations for pre-1978 homes, known as Title X, Section 1012/1013, went into effect on September 15, 2000. On March 31, 2008, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule requiring the use of lead-safe practices and other actions aimed at preventing lead poisoning. Under the rule, beginning in April 2010, contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 must be certified and must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination.

Lead-hazard information for renovation, repair and painting activities is found in the EPA lead hazard information pamphlet, *Renovate Right: Important Lead Hazard Information for Families, Child Care Providers, and Schools*. The pamphlet is available online at http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovaterightbrochure.pdf.

Beginning in December 2008, the rule requires that contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint provide the *Renovate Right: Important Lead Hazard Information for Families, Child Care Providers, and Schools* lead hazard information pamphlet to owners and occupants of child care facilities and to parents and guardians of children under age six that attend child care facilities built prior to 1978.

The rule affects paid renovators who work in pre-1978 housing and child-occupied facilities, including:

- renovation contractors
- maintenance workers in multi-family housing

[20] National Electrical Code, as amended; Uniform Plumbing Code, as amended; International Mechanical Code; International Building Code; International Residential Code (one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses up to three stories in height); residential energy standards adopted and amended by the State of Montana, incorporating the International Energy Conservation Code; International Existing Building Code, and; International Fuel Gas Code (natural gas/propane installation).

- painters and other specialty trades.

Under the rule, child-occupied facilities are defined as residential, public, or commercial buildings where children under age six are present on a regular basis. The requirements apply to renovation, repair, or painting activities. The rule does not apply to minor maintenance or repair activities where less than six square feet[21] of lead-based paint is disturbed in a room or where less than 20 square feet of lead-based paint is disturbed on the exterior. Window replacement is not minor maintenance or repair.

Beginning April 2010, federal law requires contractors to be certified and to use lead-safe work practices. Information on lead-safe work practices for contractors in the EPA pamphlet, *Contractors: Lead Safety During Renovation*, is available on EPA's web site at **http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/contractor_brochure.pdf**.

Anyone who owns or manages housing or child-occupied facilities built before 1978 and contractors who perform activities that disturb painted surfaces (including certain repairs and maintenance, and painting preparation activities) in homes and child occupied facilities built before 1978 should also read EPA's handbook, *Small Entity Compliance Guide to Renovate Right: EPA's Lead-Based Paint Renovation, Repair, and Painting Program* at **http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/sbcomplianceguide.pdf.**

The state of Montana has a commitment to ensure that recipients of HOME, CDBG, and ESG funds administer programs that adequately limit the risks associated with lead-based paint. Recipients of funding through these block grant programs are required to comply with all federal, state and local lead-based paint regulations.

Based on the number of houses in Montana that were built in 1979 or before[22], it is estimated that there are nearly 285,500 Montana housing units at risk of containing lead-based paint. Although this is approximately 69% of the housing units in the state, it is important to note that one cannot assume all of these units contain lead-based paint and the presence of lead-based paint alone does not indicate the extent of exposure hazards. Education and awareness of the potential hazards and the need to properly maintain, control, and abate lead based paint is crucial.

Applicants for CDBG and HOME funds are made aware of the requirements of the lead-based paint regulations before they apply for funds. If funded, applicants receive additional information on dealing with lead-based paint hazards. Technical assistance is available throughout the project. MDOC also promotes lead training whenever it is offered in Montana. Both the CDBG and HOME Programs allow funds to be used to assist with the cost of lead-based paint removal activities, depending upon the type of activity being funded.

[21] Less than two square feet per HUD's Lead-Safe Housing Rule (24 CFR Part 35)

[22] *Housing Condition Study*, Center for Applied Economic Research, Montana State University-Billings, February 2005; **http://housing.mt.gov/CP/housingconditionstudy.mcpx**. Note: Data only available in 10-year increments: 1960-1969, 1970-1979, etc.

The MDOC HOME program requires grantees dealing with potential lead-based paint hazards to perform, at a minimum, visual inspections to identify possible lead-based paint hazards for projects wishing to use HOME funds. Personnel conducting visual inspections are required to complete HUD's on-line Lead-Based Paint Visual Assessment Training[23], an on-line, self-paced training module for people performing visual assessments for deteriorating paint, dust, and debris. In addition, housing quality standards (HQS) inspections are performed annually at HOME, Section 8 and other rental properties throughout the state, and all homes being purchased with the assistance of HOME funds.

MDOC has adopted a policy on lead hazard reduction in keeping with federal regulations. For projects involving a home constructed prior to 1978, grantees are required to notify project beneficiaries about the hazards of lead-based paint. In addition, if housing built prior to 1978 is being rehabilitated, the housing must be inspected for defective paint. If surfaces are found to be defective, they must be treated in the course of rehabilitation. Full abatement of lead-burdened housing is a worthwhile goal. However, it is costly and caution must be taken to ensure that the work is performed in a safe manner by certified workers. The more populated areas of the state tend to have more access to resources for appropriately dealing with LBP hazards. Rural areas of the state, where rehabilitation is often the largest part of housing strategies, remain under-prepared to address lead-based paint hazards. Significant portions of rehabilitation program budgets now go to addressing LBP hazards.

MDOC does not have a lead testing or abatement program in place at this time and does not plan to test or study housing units located in the state. However, for projects assisted with HOME or CDBG funds, grantees are required to ensure that the appropriate notification, inspection, testing, interim controls or abatement, and clearance activities are followed. In addition, the HOME and CDBG Programs present information on the LBP regulations and lead-safe work practices at its application and grant administration workshops. Further, MDOC promotes lead-based paint training whenever possible.

The state does have one accredited lead analysis laboratory, Northern Analytical Laboratories of Billings, which can perform analyses on paint chips, dust wipes, and soil. The state also has several individual contractors and a few companies certified to perform LBP activities within the state; however, coverage is spotty, and the construction industry and the persons involved in construction are constantly changing.

Additional information about lead-based paint abatement is available through the EPA at http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm. Information on HUD's Lead-Safe Housing Rule is located at http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/enforcement/lshr.cfm.

POVERTY

According to figures gathered by the U.S. Census Current Population Survey Program in the March Supplement, Montana's estimated poverty rate has ranged from 12.8 to 16.5

[23] **http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/training/training_curricula.cfm**

percent during the past 6 years (2007 to 2012). The downturn in the U.S. economy during this period led to higher poverty estimates for most states including all of Montana's neighbors.

POVERTY RATE OF INDIVIDUALS - ALL AGES
3-Year Averages

State	2005 - 2007	2006 - 2008	2007 - 2009	2008 - 2010	2009 - 2011	2010 - 2012
United States	12.5%	12.7%	13.4%	14.2%	14.8%	15.0%
Idaho	9.8%	10.6%	12.0%	13.3%	14.4%	14.7%
Montana	**13.4%**	**13.1%**	**13.1%**	**13.4%**	**14.8%**	**14.8%**
North Dakota	10.6%	10.8%	10.7%	11.6%	11.2%	11.3%
South Dakota	10.7%	11.1%	12.2%	13.5%	14.1%	13.6%
Wyoming	10.5%	10.3%	10.1%	9.6%	9.8%	10.0%

Source: USCensus Bureau, CPS March Supplement
Figures for previous years may have been revised.
Compiled Oct. 2013 by the Census & Economic Information Center, MT Dept. of Commerce (www.ceic.mt.gov)

Given that the annual figures are estimates with margin of error, looking at three-year averages in the table above provides a general view of poverty level trends. As the table shows, when averaging the estimates across three years, the percent of individuals in poverty has been relatively static for Montana and neighboring states and the U.S. as whole with an upturn in the most recent period (2010 to 2012).

POVERTY RATE OF INDIVIDUALS - ALL AGES

State	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
United States	12.5%	13.2%	14.3%	15.1%	15.0%	15.0%
Idaho	9.9%	12.2%	13.7%	13.8%	15.8%	14.4%
Montana	**13.0%**	**12.8%**	**13.5%**	**14.5%**	**16.5%**	**13.4%**
North Dakota	9.3%	11.8%	10.9%	12.6%	9.9%	11.4%
South Dakota	9.4%	13.1%	14.1%	13.6%	14.5%	14.8%
Wyoming	10.8%	10.2%	9.3%	9.6%	10.7%	9.8%

Source: US Census Bureau, CPS March Supplement
Figures for previous years may have been revised.
Compiled Oct. 2013 by the Census & Economic Information Center, MT Dept. of Commerce (www.ceic.mt.gov)

For those individuals and families living at these low income levels, it is the goal of the state to improve their standard of living so they can rise out of poverty. The state utilizes a number of strategies to accomplish this goal.

First, Montana is committed to utilizing employment as the primary strategy for poverty reduction. The state has a well-coordinated employment and training system, which ensures that resources for advancement through employment, such as the Workforce

Investment Act (WIA), TANF, and state resources such as higher education and economic development, are available to low-income families. The Work Readiness Component (WoRC) provides employment and training services to individuals receiving cash assistance. Administrators of these programs meet regularly to ensure coordination and results.

Second, the state provides a series of work supports to stabilize families as they increase their skills and seek better employment. These supports include TANF, energy assistance, health care, childcare, housing assistance and advocacy. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly the Food Stamp Program) provides benefits to eligible families to supplement their food budget and increase their ability to purchase healthy foods. SNAP Nutrition Education, operated jointly with Montana State University, teaches participants to use their food stamp benefits wisely.[24]

In November 2006, Montana voters approved Initiative 151, which raised the minimum wage from the federally mandated $5.15 per hour to $6.15 per hour on January 1, 2007. The initiative also calls for year adjustments tied to the cost of living. The wage, which is adjusted each September based on the national Consumer Price Index, increased to $6.90 on January 1, 2009. Effective July 24, 2009, the minimum wage increased to $7.25 based on the federal minimum wage increase, where it remained for 2010. The minimum wage increased to $7.35 in 2011, $7.65 in 2012, and $7.90 effective January 1, 2014. Initiative 151 did not change the $4-an-hour minimum wage for a business with annual gross sales of $110,000 or less.

DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

The state remains committed to developing and enhancing institutional structures in the state, including private industry, nonprofit organizations, public institutions, and local governments. The state supports policies and programs that support decent, safe, affordable housing, services for the homeless, and other non-housing community development activities, such as infrastructure enhancement and economic development. Throughout the year, CDBG, HOME, ESG, and other MDOC and MDPHHS staff participate in various working groups, committees, and councils that further promotes developing and enhancing institutional structure, as discussed in the section on Consultation and Coordination. The state maintains its commitment to inform others of their responsibility to participate in the consolidated planning process and to promote affordable housing, adequate infrastructure, and economic development in local communities and supports a broad-based “team” approach to address community development and housing issues.

MDOC is developing a new competitive program that will provide strategic technical assistance, comprehensive planning, and infrastructure funding to Montana communities. MDOC will assist competitively chosen communities in developing a comprehensive strategic plan that will guide the development of housing, infrastructure, public health and safety services, and economic development to encourage long-term sustainable growth.

[24] http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/

MDOC will facilitate direct consultation with other state and federal agencies and local non-profits to provide a comprehensive approach to the planning and implementation of the improvements. The planning and project funds, partnered with other state and federal agency funds, can assist communities in implementing the strategic objectives identified in the local community plan.

Housing

MDOC, USDA Rural Development, and others continue improving coordination in the area of joint applications, workshops, reporting forms, and project monitoring.

The MDOC HOME Program continues to advise nonprofit groups on how to form certified community housing development organizations (CHDOs). Local governments (cities, towns, and counties), PHAs, and CHDOs are eligible to apply for HOME grant funds under the HUD-approved program description. Additionally, local governments, PHAs, and CHDOs approved to access HOME funds for homebuyer assistance also qualify to access set-aside first mortgage loan funds from MBOH at a lower interest rate.

The Housing Coordinating Team facilitates statewide coordination in the delivery of housing services to individual housing providers and local organizations. In the past, areas of cooperation included evaluating the effects of impact fees on affordable housing, coordinating monitoring requirements within MDOC programs, and making minor adjustments to the common application for housing projects. Participating organizations include MDOC, MDPHHS, local HUD field office, USDA-RD, nonprofit housing providers, local housing authorities, Tribal housing authorities, and other nonprofit organizations.

Community and Economic Development

The Community Development Block Grant Programs work with eligible units of local government in distributing CDBG funds. Funds are generally awarded on a competitive basis throughout the state. MDOC conducts web-based and in-person training for recipient communities after grant awards to acquaint the recipients with the federal requirements that accompany the funds. Issues addressed include environmental review, labor standards, procurement standards, civil rights, fair housing, and equal opportunity. The programs conduct webinars for application and administration guidance. Specifically, the economic development webinars are posted on the website at: **http://cdbged.mt.gov/webinars.mcpx**

In addition, the CDBG programs conduct administrative rule hearings on proposed application deadlines, grant administration guidelines, and program changes for the upcoming year. Local government officials and staff, community and economic development agencies, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and the general public interested in the Montana CDBG Program are notified in advance of the hearing and are invited to comment, either in person or in writing.

To further assist communities across the state of Montana, the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) provides access to a land use attorney and professional land use planner. These two positions allow CTAP to provide land use and general community

planning technical assistance to local governments, developers, surveyors, and the public. Such assistance includes sharing professional knowledge, conducting workshops, and providing "model" documents, publications and research materials. Some of the more common topics that CTAP provides assistance on are growth policy development and implementation subdivision regulations, exemptions from subdivision review, the use of Certificates of Survey and deeds, zoning regulations and making decisions on land use, affording due process and ethics. For more information, go to http://comdev.mt.gov/ctap/default.mcpx.

Montana Finance Information Center

The Montana Finance Information Center provides summary information for significant financing resources available from state, federal, and local institutions. The web site is organized as much as possible by source and point of application. Preference for organizational purposes is given to the actual level that provides funding to businesses and local governments. For example, the state of Montana MicroBusiness Development Loan Program is listed under local resources because the business applicant applies locally within each of the MicroBusiness Development Corporation (MBDC) regions, not directly to the state. The financing decision is made locally. Direct web links are provided wherever possible for direct connection to funding sources. For more information, go to **http://www.mtfinanceonline.com/**.

Certified Regional Development Corporations

The 2003 Montana Legislature created the Certified Regional Development Corporations Program (CRDC). The legislative intent of the CRDC program is to encourage a regional approach to economic development that facilitates the efficient delivery of economic development programs by supporting regional capacity building.

CRDCs are required to have the support of all counties and a majority of the incorporated cities and towns in their region to obtain and maintain certification. Eleven CRDCs have been formed (see map in Appendix C, page C-21 and placed under contract to provide technical assistance within their respective regions and are responsible for helping local officials, communities, and businesses "assess, plan, and facilitate action" within their regions. CRDCs facilitate the identification of priority needs of local communities. There is a clear recognition that local strategic planning is critical in developing local economies. CRDCs foster collaboration and bring elected officials, business leaders, and stakeholders together to prepare and implement regional development strategies.

CRDCs also provide business technical assistance and financing, leveraging financial resources from a variety of sectors that include government (federal, state, county, and local), the private sector, philanthropic community, and academia to aid in the expansion of their regions economy. For example, CRDCs manage revolving loan funds that are designed to assist new and expanding businesses. Business financing through an RLF assists in making a project a reality and thereby creating new local employment opportunities.

Visit **http://businessresources.mt.gov/default.mcpx** and **http://businessresources.mt.gov/CRDC/crdcmap.mcpx** for more information on the Certified Regional Development Corporations.

Public Institutions

MDPHHS is the primary state agency overseeing a number of programs impacting Montanans' daily lives. The mission of MDPHHS is to improve and protect the health, well-being, and self-reliance of MDPHHS include aging services, long-term care, disability services, drug and alcohol addiction, mental health, foster care, adoption, childcare, protection and support, energy assistance, public health and safety, food stamps, and public assistance. For additional information on the Public Health and Human Services, go to **http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/**.

Senior and Long Term Care. The Senior and Long Term Care Division advocates and promotes dignity and independence for older Montanans and Montanans with disabilities by providing information, education, and assistance; planning, developing and providing for quality long-term care services; and operating within a cost-effective service delivery system. The division administers aging services, adult protective services, and the state's two veterans' homes. It also helps to fund care for elderly and disabled Montanans who are eligible for Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

Disability Services Division. The mission of the Disability Services Division (DSD) of the Public Health and Human Services is to provide services that help Montanans with disabilities to live, work, and fully participate in their communities. DSD provides or contracts to provide a wide variety of services for Montanans of all ages who have physical, mental, or developmental disabilities.

Services are provided through five primary programs: Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation including Blind and Low Vision Services, Disability Determination, the Montana Telecommunications Access Program, and the Montana Developmental Center in Boulder. Among the services DSD provides are residential services, community support, home-based services for families, case management, a variety of employment outcome-related services, telephone relay service and equipment, rehabilitation counseling, and specialized services for blind and visually impaired individuals, which includes low vision evaluations and equipment for older individuals with visual impairments to maintain independence.

Addictive & Mental Disorders Division. The mission of the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division (AMDD) of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services is to implement and improve an appropriate statewide system of prevention, treatment, care, and rehabilitation for Montanans with mental disorders or addictions to drugs or alcohol. AMDD provides chemical dependency and adult mental health services by contracting and providing reimbursement for services with behavioral health providers throughout Montana. It also provides services through three inpatient facilities: the Montana State Hospital in Warm Springs, Montana Chemical Dependency Center in Butte, and Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center in Lewistown.

Human & Community Services Division. Primarily through the Human & Community Services Division (HCSD), the Public Health and Human Services administers a number of public assistance programs aimed at helping low-income Montanans move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. These include childcare assistance, Healthy Montana Kids (formerly Children's Health Insurance Plan or CHIP), children's health insurance plan, energy assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants & Children (WIC), TANF, and homeless programs.
http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/programsservices/publicassistanceprograms.shtml

The mission of the HCSD is to support the strengths of families and communities by promoting employment and providing the assistance necessary to help families and individuals meet basic needs and work their way out of poverty. The HCSD provides cash assistance, employment training, food stamps, Medicaid, childcare, meal reimbursement, nutrition training, energy assistance, weatherization, and other services to help families move out of poverty and toward self-support. The HCSD administers a federal Community Services Block Grant to fund local projects aimed at addressing the causes of poverty and the Emergency Shelter Grant to help local shelters and HRDCs provide lodging for individuals and families who are without, or at risk of being without, housing. The HCSD also provides coordination and support for the Montana Continuum of Care Coalition for the Homeless, the Montana Council on Homelessness, and the tri-state HOPWA program that is funded through HUD's competitive grant process.

ENHANCING COORDINATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

MDOC is committed to improving coordination between public and private housing entities and social service agencies serving low- and very low-income households. Throughout the year, MDOC interacts with other agencies and organizations with a commitment to better develop housing strategies. MDOC maintains its commitment to inform others of their responsibility to participate in the consolidated planning process and to promote affordable housing and adequate services, as described in the Consultation and Coordination section beginning on page one.

FOSTERING PUBLIC HOUSING INITIATIVES

Public housing authorities are set up under state law at the local level to better meet the needs of the local community. MDOC is committed to improving coordination between public and private entities serving low- and very low-income households. See the previous discussions on the Housing Coordinating Team, the Montana Continuum of Care, Montana Council on Homelessness, and Home Choice Coalition.

The Housing Assistance Bureau of MDOC contracts with HUD as the statewide PHA using an annual Contributions Contract to provide program administration and services on Section 8 low-income housing programs on a statewide basis. The Tenant Based Section 8 Program uses 35 local field agents in 11 locations throughout the state to provide field services, issue assistance documents, perform inspections, and examine annual income.

In the event the state is notified by HUD that a public housing agency in Montana is designated by HUD as “troubled”, MDOC will determine if it can provide assistance to the public housing agency.

IX. MONITORING

CDBG. Projects will be monitored on-site during the plan year. A basic requirement of the Montana CDBG Programs, Housing and Neighborhood Renewal, Public Facilities and Economic Development, is that state program staff will monitor each project at least once. CDBG operates under a comprehensive monitoring system, meaning that all elements of the local CDBG project are reviewed in up to eleven different areas. Within each of these areas, staff completes an extensive checklist whereby each project element is reviewed for compliance with HUD and state program requirements. Following the monitoring visit, staff writes a formal, follow-up letter to the chief elected official of the local government, noting any "Concerns," "Questions of Performance," or "Findings", that may have resulted from the monitoring visit. Local governments are asked to respond promptly regarding any questions of performance or findings.

HOME. Typically, HOME projects will be monitored during the project development phase and at the conclusion of the project. Staff also monitor various areas of each project through the use of desk audits as needed throughout the life of the project. Monitoring includes determining compliance with housing codes and applicable federal and state regulations and policies, assessing affirmative marketing actions and outreach to minority and women owned businesses, and ensuring that all funds have been properly expended. The HOME Program staff will specifically check HOME funds drawn on a minimum of 15% of the drawdown requests for each HOME-funded project. In addition, monitoring visits verify that participants’ incomes and rents, purchase price or after-rehabilitation values are within HOME limits.

In order to more efficiently use staff time and minimize the high cost of travel in a state as vast as Montana, the HOME Program is implementing a process to conduct desk monitoring for some grantees. Grantees selected for desk monitoring are considered to be low-risk based on factors such as past performance, experience completing similar types of projects, and low staff turnover.

On-site visits of rental units will be conducted throughout the period of affordability with the frequency of the visits based on the number of project units. During on-site visits, HOME staff members verify that properties meet HQS inspection requirements, house income-qualified tenants, and charge rents that meet HOME requirements.

Annually, grantees that received funds for rental or homebuyer assistance programs are required to certify that their projects still meet affordability requirements. For rentals, grantees must certify that tenant incomes and project rents meet HOME limits and that the property continues to meet housing quality standards. Homebuyer projects must certify that recipients of HOME funds continue to use the assisted property as their permanent residence and report any program income or CHDO proceeds resulting from property sales.

ESG. The MDPHHS provides on-site monitoring of the ESG Program via regularly scheduled monitoring visits by program staff, using a monitoring tool. Staff reviews the matching requirements, budget, and performance (both financial and operational) against contracted activities in the approved ESG work plans, and reviews fiscal accountability and timeliness of report submission. This monitoring is part of a comprehensive annual review of all programs funded by the Intergovernmental Human Services Bureau.

X. IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE

In the Fair Housing Act, it is a policy of the United States to prohibit any person from discriminating in the sale or rental of housing, the financing of housing, or the provision of brokerage services, including in any way making unavailable or denying a dwelling to any person, because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin. Montana law (Section 49, Chapter 2, MCA) also defines illegal housing discrimination and includes age, creed, and marital status as protected classes.

According to HUD, impediments to fair housing choice include actions or omissions in the state that constitute violations of the Fair Housing Act. Further, impediments mean actions or omissions that are counter-productive to fair housing choice or that have the effect of restricting housing opportunities based on protected classes.

MDOC is responsible for conducting the Analysis of Impediments (AI), taking actions to address the impediments within its jurisdiction, and monitoring the results of those actions, and certifying HOME and CDBG grantees affirmatively further fair housing. However, MDOC lacks the authority to solve these problems alone. The task of eliminating the impediments to fair housing rests on the shoulders of all Montanans.

Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

The Analysis of Impediments for the State of Montana has uncovered several issues that can be considered barriers to affirmatively furthering fair housing and, consequently, impediments to fair housing choice. These are as follows:

- Lack of knowledge of fair housing and fair housing law;
- Lack of sufficient fair housing outreach and education;
- Ineffective use of current system capacity;
- Lack of effective referral system;
- Confusion about fair housing, affordable housing and landlord/tenant issues;
- Disproportionately high denial rates for racial and ethnic minorities;
- Denial rates disproportionately higher in lower-income areas, especially for American Indians.

MDOC has identified actions that will be taken in response to the identified impediments. The actions are presented by approach and include education and coordination objectives, as follows:

Education Objectives

- Partner with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Human Rights Bureau and Montana Fair Housing to:
  - Expand outreach and education of fair housing law to improve public understanding,
  - Design, promote and provide fair housing education to improve and enhance understanding of affirmatively furthering fair housing for specific groups including, but not limited, to:
    - Consumers, including Native Americans and Hispanics
    - Housing providers, including program managers, builders, architects and unregulated property managers
    - Real estate agents and lender/bankers
    - General citizenry throughout the state, especially people in rural areas of the state
    - Units of local government, including zoning and planning personnel, building code inspectors, and elected officials to communicate the obligations of affirmatively furthering fair housing and, common public administrative procedures used to affirmatively further fair housing
  - Educate housing developers, builders and other housing providers about accessibility and visitability,
- Explore the feasibility of partnering with the Montana Financial Education Coalition to provide homebuyer training at the secondary education level,
- Explore ways to enhance current first-time homebuyer programs statewide, including communicating how credit works, how to avoid credit problems, how to identify predatory lending and the attributes of a predatory loan,
- Continue to publish and distribute fair housing educational materials and guides.
- Section 3 Coordination & Implementation, when awarded HUD Section 3 grant, through development of policies and procedures to meet the regulatory requirements of Section 3.

Coordination Objectives

- Through the MDOC's Housing Coordinating Team, establish a fair housing subcommittee, which would have an advisory group that includes landlords, bankers, attorneys, Realtors®, and others, to:
  - Review fair housing efforts and develop methods to provide better outreach and education that meets the needs of these groups,
  - Research best practices for affirmatively furthering fair housing by units of local government, particularly zoning and land use practices and building codes,

- Develop a list of objectives to recommend to communities that have received, or may receive, HUD-funded housing and community development programs,
- Review the feasibility of units of local government adopting fair housing ordinances and coordinating these ordinances with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry and Human Rights Bureau.

➢ Increase the MDOC's role as an information clearinghouse by including additional information on the Housing Division web site including Montana landlord/tenant law, federal and Montana fair housing laws, and Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 design and construction standards.

➢ Explore a partnership with Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Building Codes Bureau to develop methods to educate builders, developers, inspectors, planners, and architects about accessible housing design and construction requirements.

➢ Support the efforts of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Human Rights Bureau to seek substantially equivalent status with HUD.

➢ Coordinate educational efforts with the HUD, the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Human Rights Bureau, and Montana Fair Housing.

Other Efforts and Outreach Activities

MDOC has been involved in various other educational efforts and outreach activities to affirmatively further fair housing during the plan year. These efforts and activities are summarized below.

- MDOC's Housing Coordinating Team has established a Fair Housing Advisory Subcommittee that meets several times a year and currently includes representatives from the following associations: Lenders, Real Estate Professionals, Property Management Professionals, Program Compliance Professionals, Site Managers, Property Owners, Landlords, Non-Profit Housing Organizations, and Developers of Affordable Housing. This group works collaboratively to expand knowledge of Fair Housing, using the results from the Analysis of Impediments to form immediate priorities, as well as long term goals.
- An agenda item for the Biennial Montana Housing Partnership Conference, held in June 2010, was Fair Housing Continuing Education Training. Presented by James Whiteside, an Equal Opportunity Specialist for HUD, the training covered fair housing laws and regulations, fair housing protections and prohibitions, design and construction requirements, etc. The session was attended by housing professionals from around the state, including lenders, real estate professionals, property management professionals, program compliance professionals, site managers, property owners, landlords, nonprofit housing organizations, and developers of affordable housing.
- The Montana Board of Housing and Housing Division provides a list of "housing rights, fair housing advocates, legal assistance, and other resources" available in the state as a "featured resource on its web page: **http://housing.mt.gov/content/FAR/docs/HousingRightsTable.pdf**

- Originally developed as a component of the *Montana Housing Resource Directory*, the listing provides basic information on where citizens can find assistance for issues relating to housing rights, fair housing, legal issues, etc.

- For any person in Montana with any disability who is searching for rental housing, the **MTHousingSearch.com** website, sponsored and paid for by MDOC, has made the search much easier. When entering the search criteria, using the Accessible tab, there are over 20 commonly desired physical characteristics for a house or apartment that helps narrow the search immediately to a smaller subset, thus enabling anyone to find the perfect rental home for their unique needs.

  Socialserve.com, which hosts the web site, has demonstrated, with their work on the **MTHousingSearch.com** website, a commitment to seeking out national standards and best-practices regarding the design of web pages that can be used by persons with disabilities (i.e., people who use 'screen readers').

- MDOC provides copies of the "Analysis of Impediments" at the housing application workshops and Consolidated Plan meetings and supplies copies to individuals and organizations requesting them. The AI is also available on the web site: **http://housing.mt.gov/content/CP/docs/CPDocsAndRpts/CPAI10.pdf**

- MDOC provides brochures and posters distributed by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry Human Rights Bureau to grantees and as requested by individuals and organizations. MDOC also makes the brochures and posters available at workshops and other events. The brochures are also available on HRB's website: http://erd.dli.mt.gov/human-rights/montana-human-rights-laws/housing-discrimination.html

- Households can apply online for the Section 8 waiting list from any location that has internet access, including public libraries, public assistance offices, etc.

- The HOME and CDBG programs provide fair housing information and program requirements in its application guidelines and administration manual. Grant recipients are required to show efforts to further fair housing, and each of the programs' staffs monitor recipients for compliance.

Within the constraints of our budget and staff resources, as well as our obligation to document compliance with numerous other federal laws and regulations, we believe MDOC has demonstrated strong and sincere efforts in regard to furthering fair housing through the HUD-funded programs.